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CONVERSATIONS ON WAR

AND

GENERAL CULTURE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FRIENDS IN COUNCIL."

BOSTON:
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1871.

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London, March, 1871.

MY DEAR RUSKIN,

I DEDICATE these "Conversations on War and Culture" to you, feeling that there is no one who will receive them with more kindliness, and endeavour with more earnestness to make the best of them.

I sympathize with you very cordially in the great effort you are making to draw attention to the wants of the labouring classes. Whatever may be the measure of your success in that difficult work, you, at any rate, have set a great example in showing that a man, who has an especial aptitude for teaching the most advanced students in matters of high art, can, for the moment, put aside his especial vocation, in order to make mankind address themselves to the far greater question of how the poorer classes can be raised to independence of thought, comfort of living, and dignity of behaviour.

I remain,

Yours affectionately,

THE AUTHOR.

J. Ruskin, Esq., LL.D.

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CONVERSATIONS

ON

WAR AND GENERAL CULTURE.

CHAPTER I.

[THE conversations which I am about to report, took place soon after the early victories of the Germans over the French. I suppose it would have been better if these conversations had been confined to one subject—as, doubtless, Mr. Milverton had originally intended that they should be. But conversation is a thing that no one of the interlocutors can rule; and it will proceed in its own sinuous and eccentric way. The intense interest which every one in England feels in this war, makes it almost impossible for any

conversation to go on without interruptions arising from a reference to the awful scenes which are taking place in a neighbouring country.

As for me, I am but a mere reporter, and cannot, of course, direct or restrain the conversation to any particular topic. I dare say that my short-hand brethren, the reporters in the House of Commons, would also, sometimes, like to be able to guide and restrain the debate; but in this respect they are powerless in their sphere, as I in mine.

I think, moreover, that it may interest many of my readers to see how questions relating to war were interwoven in these conversations with questions relating to general culture.

It was at a country-house, and during the recess, that those persons, who are called "Friends in Council," met, and thus conversed.]

Mr. Milverton. I have a subject in hand, which I have long wished to discuss with you. It has reference to general culture, and especially to the deficiency of information which prevails among those whom we call the best-informed classes.

Sir John Ellesmere. Is there any burridge in the garden, Sandy?

Milverton. Now, that shows the want of information in certain persons. It is not *burridge*, but borage, derived from the Latin "borago."

Ellesmere. Never mind the spelling. Let this wretched pedant have his way; but do you, Sandy, go and get the borage, and insist upon a large bowl of claret-cup being made; otherwise I, for one, will not assist at any lecture upon culture, and will be content with the paucity of information which I possess.

I thank my stars that I am a humble personage.

Mr. Cranmer. Your stars, Ellesmere, must be stars of a very moderate capacity, and very ready to be thanked, if they sanction this appeal to them respecting your humility.

Milverton. Mine is a very ungrateful task. I want to show you all, how very ill-educated we are; and how very few of us can presume to call ourselves men of culture in any liberal sense of the word.

Ellesmere. Now he is going to oppress us with his vast powers of memory. He will make out that everybody is a savage, and only fit to be

a cannibal, who does not know fifteen languages, and five-and-twenty separate branches of science.

This is the kind of thing which Milverton's prodigious memory enables him to say to you: "It was seven years ago, when we were at the end of that gravel walk, and were just going into the greenhouse, that you mentioned to me that I must be an idiot if I believed that, in our time, we should ever have household suffrage. It was on a Tuesday, if you recollect, and you were going up to town early on Wednesday morning." I do not like living with fellows that have such a memory. The pleasant people to live with are those that forget soon. What a memory women have for injuries!

Cranmer. I don't wonder, Ellesmere, you wish to live with people of short memories. Never mind: I forget nine-tenths of the outrageous things you have ever said against me.

Ellesmere. Thank you, Cranmer. I can assure you I very soon forget your piercing sarcasms. I say with Cæsar, let me have men about me that are fat, and can forget things. The British public is a charming public to deal with. Why? Because it is fat, and can forget things. Otherwise it would fare ill with certain

politicians whom I could name, and who always rely upon the splendid forgetfulness of that excellent public. I hate your lean, remembera-tive people.

By the way, I do not find that Milverton is so prone to recollect those remarks I made to him seven years ago, which have turned out to be quite right.

Milverton. I suppose you will now allow me to commence the consideration of the subject which I wish so much to bring before you. It would, perhaps, be advisable for me, in the first instance, to arrange the subject of culture under the following——

Ellesmere. I do think, Milverton, you are the oddest man in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. At this moment we are all of us thinking, day and night, (at least, all of us except you), about this dreadful war; but your stoical or epicurean mind suddenly betakes itself to the serene contemplation of culture. I believe you do it for the sake of paradox.

Milverton. What should you say, then, if I were to tell you that the general subject of culture has been revived in my mind by the consideration of this war?

What is the real cause of the late defeats of the French? "Ignorance, my dear madam," as Dr. Johnson once said, "simple ignorance," —ignorance of topography; ignorance of language; ignorance of what was going on in other nations; ignorance of their own resources.

I do not wonder that Charles V., as a statesman and a soldier, thought so highly of a knowledge of languages, when he said, "The man who knows two languages is twice a man." A sort of sublime conceit seems to overcome the French in their study of foreign languages, when they do study them. They can't spell a foreign name rightly; they can't make a quotation accurately. I took up yesterday a work of one of their greatest scholars. He must needs quote Shakespeare after this fashion: "To be, or *no* to be;" and as for proper names, the only two names that I have observed them always to spell accurately, are "London" and "Palmerston." How true that copy-book sentence is, that "Conceit is the mother of Ignorance." There is nothing so dangerous as your supposing you know a thing when you do not know it. This kind of conceit has been the ruin of theologians, metaphysicians, geographers——

Ellesmere. Historians——

Milverton. ——and statesmen. In this particular case I should rather like to turn the word culture into *information.* It is the want of information,—proceeding, however, very largely from a want of culture, which is the ruin of States.

War is a thing which of necessity occupies—I may say absorbs—our attention while it is going on; but observe in history how uninteresting a thing it is for the most part. One war is very like another. Some years hence, if this conversation were to be reported, a reader would hardly know for a time of which war we were talking. To make any use of our study of any particular war, our object should be to get behind or beyond the common topics, and to see what are the true causes of success or failure.

Sir Arthur Godolphin. And for that purpose, I agree with Milverton, we must come back to culture.

Milverton. Yes; can you doubt, for instance, what will be the groundwork of failure on our part, if we ever do fail in war? Will it not be our defect in organizing—that horrid want of arrangement and of forethought which is to be seen throughout our civil life? For instance,

there is a certain great railway station, not very far from London. I see all our Crimean blunders at that station. I contemplate it with awe, considering the immense stupidity of which mankind —British mankind—is capable. Everything is done that should be omitted, and everything is omitted that should be done. Do you suppose that the same want of arrangement, which is visible at that station, and in many others like it, will not be displayed in our arrangements for war? You take such a mean view, Ellesmere, of the word culture. I do not mean exclusively the culture that is to be attained from books. I have shown elsewhere, for example, that organization is a thing that can be taught,—that people can be brought up to be good organizers. Why, even the defects of temperament can in a great degree be cured by culture! It is said, that in this war, their arms of precision have not been made the most use of by the French, on account of their excitability of temperament, and their indulgence in aimless rapidity of firing.

Cranmer. I was much struck by what you said, Milverton, as regards the mischief which has been caused to the French by their ignorance of foreign languages.

Ellesmere. Yes; I dare say that a knowledge of those dreadful irregular verbs in the German would have made a difference in the war.

Milverton. I mean something much wider and deeper than that peculiar form of ignorance. What a disadvantage that nation is under of which other nations know much, while it knows but little of other nations. The Greeks were sure to be beaten ultimately by the barbarians, as they called them, because they knew so little of those barbarians.

Sir Arthur. It is a similar disadvantage that we authors, Milverton, labour under in society. Other people know so much about us—about our most cherished opinions—while we know so little about them.

Lady Ellesmere. If Shakespeare had travelled, would he have been a greater man?

Mr. Mauleverer. I think very little of travelling. A fool longs to carry his folly to the uttermost ends of the earth. He does carry it thither, and he brings it all back with him.

Milverton. I am not going to declare that any particular form of culture is the only form, or the chief form. Keeping our discourse for the moment upon culture as regards war, let me

point out to you what a signal proof of culture is to be seen in the wonderful kindness shown to the wounded. What does this indicate? It shows that Christian culture, though it has not succeeded in eradicating war, has introduced a spirit of humanity hitherto unknown. We now feel something of what is the worth of any individual man, looked at in every possible way, as a son, a husband, a father, a cultivator.

Sir Arthur. A possible inventor.

Milverton. The feebleness of the world proceeds from its want of real men. And even the least worthy of men, with the exception of confirmed thieves, hardly ever pass through the world without having done some one good stroke of work for it.

Mauleverer. I am sorry to be obliged so often to come in and check Milverton's enthusiasm, when he rushes into some absurd praise of mankind. He admits that his "Christian culture" has not "eradicated war;" but I really do think it might have done something more than it has done to prevent war. How we smile with contempt at the ancient mode of deciding disputes by "wager of battle" between one man and another. Is this mode of settling disputes made

more sensible by many men being engaged in it? Has arbitration made any advance as a means of reconciling nations? I pause for a reply.

Ellesmere. Then you are full of hope for mankind, and are astonished that they do not do better. I thought you held with Byron, that man has ever been a wretched creature, and ever will be. Besides, you know, people must be excited, and nothing is more exciting than war.

Milverton. Don't talk in that heartless way, Ellesmere. It might have been true in former days. I really don't know what a baron in olden times had to amuse him but wars and forays. But now there is so much to interest and occupy any man, from kings downwards—things which we did not appreciate before. Look at the savagery of great towns. Would it not be enough for the fame of any great minister or potent monarch, if it could be said of him, that he found his capital, or any of his great towns, treeless, colourless, bathless, mudful, smoke-stained, its amusements coarse, the dress of its inhabitants hideous, its food adulterated, its drink pernicious, its crime organized, its infectious diseases for the most part unguarded against, its open spaces

gradually being encroached upon;—and that he left it a bright, beautiful, well-behaved, healthy city, with honest food to eat, and graceful amusements to amuse it?

Ellesmere. And large spaces for the children and the dogs to play in.

Milverton. This is harder work, too; requiring much more intellect and energy than going to war.

Sir Arthur. I want to revert to our discussion of the present war. Let us keep to that for the moment.

Milverton. If so, there is a remark which I want to make about it.

Our newspapers have received great praise, and justly so, for the immense pains they have taken to keep us well informed about the progress of the war.

Ellesmere. That is their business; it pays.

Cranmer. I believe Ellesmere dislikes to hear anybody praised.

Milverton. But I was going to say that they deserve more praise, and Ellesmere will not grudge it to them, for the pains they have taken to bring out clearly the horrors and miseries of war.

Ellesmere. I believe Milverton has written several of those articles himself.

Milverton. No, I have not. I have a sort of despair of writing anything upon the subject; and if it were not a paradox to say so, I think I feel these horrors and miseries too acutely to write about them well.

Sir Arthur. And then, too, one feels that in addressing the British people, one is addressing that people which requires the least lecturing upon the subject. One feels that they might reply to one by saying, "We know all that; it is no news to us: but what can we do?"

Milverton. It is a curious thing; but, far and away, the best writers who have written books on this subject, are Frenchmen.

I will tell you what would be a famous thing for the world; and that would be, to institute a course of reading for the young of foreign countries on this subject. How I should like to be a Civil Service Examiner in Prussia, France, or Russia, in order to institute such a course.

Cranmer. What would be the nature of it?

Milverton. There would be very instructive bits which I should select from the old chroniclers,

from Gibbon, and from some of the histories of Eastern wars, which were singularly cruel wars. Then I should have, as a text-book, one of the best accounts of Napoleon's Russian Campaign. There are admirable books on that campaign. Then I should insist upon the Erckmann-Chatrian novels as a subject of examination. And, lastly, for the higher classes, I should insist upon Bastiat's great work forming the basis of their anti-warlike studies. These are the French authors I allude to.

Cranmer. I have read other works of Bastiat; but not the one which you speak of.

Milverton. It is excellent. One of the great maxims which I hold to in life, is, that the indirect results of any evil are nearly sure to be the most formidable results. This is what Bastiat shows as regards war, and as regards standing armies and large armaments. The measure of civilization in a people, is to be found in its just appreciation of the wrongfulness of war. I do not believe that a more courageous body of men exists in the world than our fellow-countrymen, or any people who would more delight in the severest physical contests. I cannot imagine a people who would be more fervid

when they had undertaken a just war. But it must be just, or they must believe it to be just; or, at any rate, they must hold it to be absolutely necessary; otherwise their conscientiousness would blunt their swords.

Sir Arthur. I think you are right, Milverton. What I complain of in the French, especially in most of their great writers and speakers on this subject, is, the low view, comparatively speaking, they take of it.

Ellesmere. I think you are wrong, Sir Arthur. What you perceive and dislike in them, if I read them rightly, is, something which pervades their whole course of thought, or, I should rather say, of expression. If it were not an arrogant thing to say, these great writers and speakers ought to have a man like me at their elbow. You have no idea of the use that I have been to Milverton. These Frenchmen are in the habit of using vague generalities of expression which do fatal mischief. They make immense deductions from scanty premises; and, in short, a good deal of their writing and speaking is as the notes of the big-drum. For instance, after a man has enumerated every kind of force which could be brought to bear upon the present

emergency, there will come a sentence, perhaps occupying a paragraph, "Behind us all is France."

If you come to analyze this kind of thing, you find it contains nothing serviceable.

Cranmer. Don't you mean, Ellesmere, bombast and braggadocio?

Ellesmere. No; I do not.

Milverton. No; he does not, Cranmer. I have often longed to describe the kind of thing that Ellesmere has been endeavouring to put before us. It would require an elaborate essay to do so. I have perceived something kindred to what Ellesmere means in their greatest writings. They begin with a theory;—facts must be made to conform to it. They do not appear to me to have a sufficient appreciation of the odd and strange motives which actuate mankind. When you look into any long course of great transactions, you find scores of strange motives actuating the persons who were concerned in these transactions. I have a theory which a little explains this error of theirs, and it is, that every Frenchman is more like every other Frenchman, than every Englishman is like every other Englishman.

Sir Arthur. Hence, what is called a great

idea, when it once gets into the heads of the French, is more pestilent than it is elsewhere, as it is more supremely prevalent. All the great evils in the world have proceeded from what are called "great ideas" getting into the heads of many men. In fact, as some one has well said, "thinking in mobs" is the most dangerous thing in the world, as it is sure to lead to acting in mobs.

Milverton. Your maxim, Sir Arthur, must really be taken with much reservation. All the great good in the world has proceeded from great ideas getting hold of vast numbers of beings—Christianity for instance.

As we are all laying down maxims at present, I shall venture to propound one of my own,—namely, that one of the greatest arts in life, for nations as for individuals, is to know how to make exceptions, and this by reason of the intense laziness of mankind.

Ellesmere. And their natural objection to the painful process of having to think out anything thoroughly.

Milverton. Yes; the decadence of nations may be traced to this. I always call it Byzantine. Whenever I see in the present time, or when, reading of past times, I find a nation

rushing into one course of thought, taking up rules which they fondly imagine to be principles, I always say to myself, they are becoming Byzantine, and we shall soon see symptoms of decay. You may notice instances of this in the conduct of a dynasty, or of a ministry, as well as in that of private individuals. They come into power with a set of ideas implying a course of conduct; and they do not know when to make the exceptions.

Ellesmere. Exceptivity (I like to coin a new word: it annoys the precise Milverton, and perplexes Cranmer), exceptivity requires so much moral courage, and especially, so much fearlessness as regards the charge, which all men dread more or less, of inconsistency.

Milverton. And the worst of it is, that in the direction of public affairs it is so difficult and so dangerous to be inconsistent on the sly. *Apropos* of this, I always think of that story which the poet Coleridge used to tell so admirably, of his being on the box of a stage-coach with a coachman, who lectured him severely upon the impropriety of throwing halfpence to the beggars who followed the coach. Presently a little ragged boy followed the coach perseveringly for a long way.

Coleridge, being afraid of another lecture from the coachman, buttoned up his pockets. Soon, however, he felt some very queer jerks, which seemed to proceed from movements of the coachman; and, watching attentively, Coleridge found that the coachman was with difficulty getting halfpence out of his own pocket (you know what a bewrapped and involved creature a stage-coachman was in those days), and throwing them furtively to the ragged, shoeless child.

You see, the coachman probably knew when to make the exception, and had the courage to make it, though furtively.

Oh! how the moral of that small anecdote might be applied to more potent people than coachmen,—to those who drive the great state carriage. You find out a man of remarkable ability; you would like to employ him in the service of the State. But he is over-age; or he does not know Greek; or he has some defect or other which is hit by one of your trumpery rules; and, instead of breaking through your rule, you bless your rule, and magnify it, and say to yourselves, "How good we are to abide by our rules, and not to do what we wish to do, and what we know it would be best to do!" Have the Medes

and Persians—those men of such strictness that they have become proverbial for their abiding by laws and rules—lasted as great nations?

Ellesmere. Hurrah for "the Exceptional!" It will take its place, in Sir Arthur's vocabulary, side by side with the Good, and the True, and the Beautiful.

Milverton. Do let me give you one more instance of what I mean. I assure you it is a frequent instance. I do not know that anything has been more prejudicial to the commercial interests of the world, especially to the railway interest, than the system of "qualifications." I always protested against it from my earliest years; and I see no reason to change my opinion. What do you do? You lay down a rule that a man shall not be elected as a governor or director, unless he possesses a certain property qualification, and, moreover, which is still worse, unless he has possessed that qualification for a certain time. By this rule you limit your choice enormously. What you want is a man—a governing man; a man who will do your work well for you from the love of good government, as regards anything which he takes in hand. You will neither secure him, nor stimulate him to any great extent, by insisting

on his having a large pecuniary interest in its success. All the best men will work well, if they will work at all, without that. It was the poor man in the Scriptures whose wisdom saved the city; and probably no pecuniary interest that you could have given him, would have made him do more or less than he did—if anything, less.

Sir Arthur. This is all very true, I dare-say, Milverton. Doubtless we and the French, and every other people that I have ever known anything about, have not known how and when to admit the Exceptional. You see, I do not mind Ellesmere's somewhat faded sneer, and am quite ready to join the Exceptional with the Beautiful and the True. But my mind is at present full only on the war; and I am going to say something which will delight the malice that Mauleverer bears against mankind — or rather pretends to bear, when he is with us.

There is one thing, I say, which this war has fearfully illustrated. We had all known some-thing about this thing before,—at any rate, those of us who had read Rochefoucault, and the other writers who write cynically.

Ellesmere. I put in an objection at once. "Cynically," my dear ladies, is a word derived

from the Greek for dog, and may be rendered dogically. Now what a shame it is to put upon dogs the meanest aspects of human nature. But what were you going to say, Sir Arthur?

Sir Arthur. I was going to say that the comments upon this war have afforded the most trenchant exemplification that has been witnessed in my time, of the base and unjust condemnation which mostly follows failure.

Ellesmere. I must interrupt again. If there is anything which dogs do not delight to do, it is to condemn failure. They never desert their unfortunate master because he is unfortunate. You will say, in your foolish, critical fashion, that they do not understand failure. You little know dogs. If they did read the newspapers, it would make no difference to them. They would always be true to the master who had fed them.

Milverton. You all know that I think little of future fame, and as little of ill-fame as of good fame. I believe that if we are to recognise one another in a future life, increased knowledge will develop a sorrow and a pity that cannot even be imagined now; and that no spirit of the blest will find it in his heart to condemn the most erring

of his brethren. But, with all this belief in the toleration and the sympathy that will hereafter be produced by possessing an ampler knowledge of the conditions of humanity, one must confess that one should not like to be pointed out in a future world as the creature who, *when on earth, was always for the strongest.* If there is anything especially and undoubtedly unchristian, it is the worship of worldly success. This is Anti-Christ.

Sir Arthur. Dante has drawn many fearful pictures of what are supposed to be the extremes of human wickedness, many of them representing sins which would fall off from a disembodied creature; but I can faintly imagine what he would have said of the wretch who was always for the strongest; how he would have pictured him as inevitably a denizen of the nethermost hell of all—a hell full of the drainage of all that is execrable from all the other abodes of hell.

Milverton. I almost doubt if there is any such man. There are men who talk as if they were always for the strongest, but in their hearts they sympathise with the weakest. Nevertheless I can image something of a public character, something which should combine the occasional basenesses of many men—something commercial,

for instance—which should always be for the strongest.

Ellesmere. Well, there is one comfort, nobody can say this of me.

Cranmer. No, Sir John : your love of opposition prevents your being a victim to this vice. The crowing of the victorious party will always command a counter-crow from Sir John Ellesmere.

Ellesmere. Well said, Cranmer ; and put epigrammatically. I don't care if it be a counter-vice that prevents in me this greatest of all vices. At any rate, you believe that I am always inclined to crow out for, I would rather say to bark up for, the beaten party. And so I am. There will always be enough of hired shouting for the conquerors.

Milverton. Yes : and one can appeal to posterity. Do you remember what I quoted to you some time ago from my favourite, Metastasio ? It is where Themistocles says, "that future ages will envy him, not so much for his triumphs, as for his misfortunes,"—one of the truest sayings, I think, that have ever been said. How dull, too, is the career of an unbroken fortune !

I must, however, recall to you the very words of Metastasio ;—

Invidieranno
Forse l'età future,
Più che i trionfi miei, le mie sventure.

Ellesmere. I will give you another noble saying, the nobility of which has not been effaced by its being somewhat hackneyed :—

Victrix causa Deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

You look up, Blanche, for a translation of the Latin. I can give it you.

The Play was successful : nine newspaper critics went home with the author to supper, and said he was the finest fellow in the world. The Play was damned : the only person who went home with the author was Sir John Ellesmere, and Sir John said, that it was more to the author's credit that the Play had been damned, than it would have been had the Play been saved. Moreover, Sir John added, that it all depends upon the audience; and hisses from some people are a form of praise more welcome than clapping of hands from others.

Lady Ellesmere. What a wonderful language

Latin must be; so few words in it require so many in English to render them.

Ellesmere. The translation, my dear, was large and liberal, but not loose. There are, however, as the Latin passage intimates, very few Ellesmeres in the world. Alas for it! Hence the value of the Proverb, "Nothing fails like failure"—a more significant Proverb, perhaps, than, "Nothing succeeds like success."

Cranmer. I wish you clever people would tell us more what you think about this particular war, instead of dwelling on this particular form of human baseness.

Ellesmere. Yes; both Cranmer and I were aware that failure in the actor educed baseness in the bystander. Even the philanthropic Maul-everer will own that. But tell us what you think about the causes and the consequences of the war.

Milverton. With respect to the real causes of the war, one cannot help having much sympathy with both sides, and feeling that if we had been in the position of either side, we might have acted much as they have done. The unification of our nation is an idea which, if we had been in a similar position to that of the German people,

would have been a most stirring idea with us, and would have induced us to do many good things.

Sir Arthur. And many bad things.

Ellesmere. Yes; Unifications, to use Milverton's fine word, are seldom made with rose-water.

Sir Arthur. Nothing is more unscrupulous, or more cruel, than an idea—or rather, than the men who once become possessed by an idea.

Milverton. The first Napoleon hated Ideologists, as he called them; and was himself a signal victim to Ideology.

But, to proceed to the motive which actuated the other side. No doubt it was a desire to maintain a military supremacy. Put it as our own case. Don't you think we should be very much inclined to go to war, on any pretext, if our naval supremacy were threatened? Of all things, the thing I like best, is, to be just if one can, and not only to be just in our dealings, but in our imaginations.

But what I want to talk to you about, is, not the causes, but the consequences, of the war. Though fully sympathising with the motives that actuate the Prussians, I cannot but view with intense alarm the indirect consequences of their victories. I fear that all European nations, and

perhaps the Americans too, will imitate the Prussian military system. Now, that I look upon as decidedly a retrograde movement for the world.

Cranmer. Wait a minute, Milverton. Will not the adoption of this system diminish standing armies?

Milverton. I do not see why it should. I believe we shall have both evils—the evil of large standing armies, and the immense evil, as it seems to me, of any portion of the best part of a civilian's life being obliged to be devoted to military training. Of course I know what is to be said on the other side; but it seems to me a retrograde movement to do away with the division of labour, which the Prussian military system tends to abrogate.

You see, I am one of those persons who think that there is a great deal to be done in the world, and not one man too many to do it;—and, moreover, that to attain excellence (considering the shortness of life), a man's whole time must be given to the subjects in which he is disposed to excel.

The great strides that have been made in civilization, have been made in the brief intervals

of peace which the world has enjoyed. Now, I do not look upon this as having been caused solely, or chiefly, by the material comfort which belongs to a state of peace; but from the time and the thought that have been devoted by individual men to the highest and noblest arts of peace. Come, now; I will bring home to you what I mean, by taking particular instances. Would you like to have had some of the best years of Faraday's life directed to military training? Or of Wheatstone's, or Sir James Simpson's, or Dickens's, or Thackeray's, or scores more, whom I could mention?

Ellesmere. I could drag on existence if all the eminent men who ever lived had done a little less than they have done.

Milverton. Yes; but, perhaps, they would have done nothing at all, if you had diverted their minds, at a critical period of their lives, from those pursuits which were especially suited to those minds. However, on reflection, I think that it was, perhaps, weak in me to take these particular instances. Do you know, Ellesmere, that agriculture is a thing requiring the whole devotion of a man's mind? You innocently suppose, I dare say, that you could get up agri-

culture;—and so you could, as far as enabling you to hold a brief in some case concerning it; but, I venture to say, that you have not an idea of the close and unremitting observation of nature, which is needful for practical success in agriculture. You would be surprised to find how much knowledge is possessed by farmers and agricultural labourers—knowledge of a kind not to be taught by books, and very much resembling that knowledge which doctors and surgeons acquire by immense experience, and which they cannot impart to you.

Cranmer. I have no doubt this is very true.

Sir Arthur. *Très-bien*, as they say in the French Chambers.

Milverton. To men like you I need hardly take the pains of working my case out further.

Lady Ellesmere. Work it out for us poor women, Leonard.

Milverton. I will, my dear. I have studied chemistry. I know pretty well what books can tell me about it; and I know enough to know that I could never be a great chemist. I see that it takes years to attain that delicate appreciation of minute differences, that intentness of eye, that severity of observation and of thought, which

would enable one to do anything in this great science. Another valuable illustration suddenly occurs to me. You think, I dare say, that it is an easy thing to look through a microscope, and to appreciate what you see by its aid; but I tell you that it takes a lifetime, with very peculiar natural advantages into the bargain, to become a good microscopic observer. In fact, you might almost reckon upon your fingers all the great microscopic observers that have existed since the discovery of the microscope.

As regards my own craft, do you suppose that the art of expressing one's ideas tolerably, comes by nature, and is not, for the most part, attained by great and constant cultivation?

Again: is there any great artist, any great statesman, who will tell you that he should have been the better artist, or the better statesman, for having given some of the best years of his life to military training?

Ellesmere. As to artists, I do not know; but as to statesmen, it appears to me that any extra knowledge that they might have gained, would have been very useful to them; and that their minds are not so crowded up with knowledge as not to be able to store away a little more.

Milverton. This is only one of your reckless sneers, Ellesmere. All the great statesmen I have ever known, have been very laborious men in their own craft, and have found quite enough to do in endeavouring to master that. They read through those Blue Books which I am afraid most of you ordinary members of Parliament only read with much skipping, if you read them at all; and then, not more than one in five, I believe, of these excellent works do you reserve for your especial reading.

Ellesmere. One in three hundred!

Milverton. Besides, look what a training in the way of previous acquisition it requires, to be a statesman. The history, the political economy, the knowledge of the resources of his own country and of other countries, he ought to have mastered. The man who has to govern India, as our Secretary of State for India, had better not have given any of the best portion of his years to military training.

Ellesmere. I suppose you would have us believe, Milverton, that Cranmer had better have been reading his Adam Smith, which of course he knows by heart, than practising the goose-step, which feat, by the way, he never would have accomplished, and which would not have aided

him in acquiring that supreme meanness by which he ever distinguished himself when he was Secretary of the Treasury. I know I never could get him to do anything for my constituents that cost more than three shillings and sixpence.

Milverton. Ah! there you touch me nearly. If statesmen had studied more closely the resources of states and the means of developing them,—if they had thoroughly appreciated the likeness and the difference, especially the difference, that there is between the fortunes of a state and of an individual, they would not be guilty of that meanness, which, I must own, may sometimes be justly imputed to them in the present day. It is the want of culture, not the excess of it in one direction, that has produced this dangerous disposition which they delight to manifest.

Sir Arthur. You think with me, Milverton, then, that it *is* dangerous?

Milverton. I do. You may think me pedantic in referring so much to History as I do; but I have ever observed that the decadence of a nation has been preluded by a fit of unreasonable economy.

Cranmer. And by a fit of unreasonable expense.

Ellesmere. Very good, Cranmer, very good indeed,—according to my thinking.

Milverton. I also am willing to say "very good." The two things are not incompatible. The pendulum may first swing too much to one side, and then too much to the other. All I maintain is, that there is as much error in the unreasonable inclination to one side as to the other.

What we gain from the study of history is a few great ideas, or rather a few great perceptions. (I mean what the French call *aperçus.*) That man is not a wise man who expects that history will closely repeat itself, as is sometimes said; but there are certain great principles——

Ellesmere. How he changes his word! First it is "ideas," then "perceptions;" then "principles."

Milverton. Never mind the word: you know what I mean. Well, one of these principles is, that there must be *continuous development* in a nation. Otherwise it stagnates: otherwise there may be a certain half-dead, half-alive prosperity about it: but it ceases to be a great nation. I contend that meanness on the part of the governors checks development on the part of the governed. New thoughts, new hopes, new

aspirations arise amongst the people. These must be favoured; or the nation stands still.

Sir Arthur. And such things cannot be favoured when you have the governing power looking upon the nation as if it were an individual tax-payer. I have heard statesmen say, "I can't consent to this or to that expense. I feel for the individual tax-payer; I throw myself into his position." Now there comes in that notion which Mr. Milverton put forward a little time ago, namely, that a statesman should learn what is the difference between the government of an individual's estate and the government of the estate of the nation.

Ellesmere. Give us an instance, Sir Arthur? I am one of those stupid fellows who never can appreciate abstract propositions. Hurrah for the concrete! is what I am always saying to myself and other people.

Sir Arthur. I cannot prove that any individual tax-payer, whom you may take at random, is benefited by technical education being favoured by the Government. Very likely his son, or his grandson may be. But one thing I am certain of; and that is, that the whole nation is benefited by an improvement in technical educa-

tion, which improvement could not be made without Government furtherance. The whole nation will be made richer by this furtherance. If our power of designing, if our chemical knowledge, if our aptitude for wedding Art to choiceness of material, is not developed, we infallibly fall behind other nations; and your friend, Cranmer, the individual tax-payer, will in some way or other suffer for that.

Milverton. I think it will puzzle you to find a good answer to what Sir Arthur has just said; but I shall carry his views much further, and into humbler forms of detail. If ever this nation is ruined, it will be by a too sedulous attention having been paid to the expenditure of those three-and-sixpences you spoke of, Ellesmere. A great nation's affairs should be conducted with immense promptitude, and with a considerable indifference to minute items of expenditure, especially when that expenditure is expended within the country. A man in power, whose whole thoughts should be given to greater things, should not have a moment's hesitation, on the score of expense, as to whether he should send a messenger hither or thither, or whether he should employ an extra clerk, &c., &c. All

these expenses are vanishing quantities, when considered with reference to the work which he has to do.

Sir Arthur. I have held high office, as you know; and my experience thoroughly tallies with Milverton's, who has also had great experience. When I was last in office I was pulled up for an expenditure unauthorized, as they told me, of 3*l.* 15*s.*—an expenditure about which there could not be the faintest shadow of a doubt of its absolute necessity. It really sickened me of office that I should have, a year and a half after the transaction had taken place, and when I had accomplished what I intended to accomplish, to fight a battle for this trumpery expenditure.

It was not always so. I recollect, many years ago, sanctioning a considerable expense without any legal authority, which I believe—indeed, I am certain—saved the country a great number of lives. Instead of being reproved, I was highly praised; but such, I fear, would not be the case now.

Milverton. No: of course it wouldn't. I will tell you something, Sir Arthur, which, with the best intentions, has produced the greatest possible

mischief. It is the recent legislation under which the Audit Office acts.

Now nothing is more reasonable than the establishment of such an office; nothing, in practice, can be more injudicious than its being encouraged—indeed, almost compelled—to be a vexatious office. In the first place, though this is a trifling matter in my eyes, comparatively speaking, it has produced great additional expense; This is No. 1 of the evils.

No. 2, which is far more important, is, that it occupies the time, and irritates the minds, of those official persons whose minds ought to be occupied in a very different way. One of the high permanent officers of State tells me that, in the midst of the most urgent business, whether writing difficult letters or conducting difficult interviews, he is constantly interrupted by his signature being demanded for the expenditure of 1*s.* 6*d.*

But I am forgetting No. 3, the most important of all. This system of vexatious audit prevents the governing man from having the courage to do that which he would otherwise undertake, and which, perhaps, is the most important part of his functions. It prevents his

undertaking those things which are eminently needful for the public service, but which it is not his bounden duty to undertake, and which, unless he is a very brave and enduring kind of person, he will not undertake for fear of botheration—a fear of the most potent kind.

We have heard a great deal of late years about red-tape and circumlocution. By far the worst kind of red-tape is that which takes the form of distrust of subordinates. That creates the red-tape of the mind—the red-tape which prevents the subordinate from doing the most infallibly necessary thing at the right time.

Now take an instance from a very small incident in the present war. A correspondent overhears a party of French cuirassiers, whose horses are tied up in the courtyard under his window, discuss their grievances. They had marched that day ten leagues. The men and the horses are exhausted. The town is full of Government forage and stores of all kinds; but though the poor men have been searching for the proper authority to furnish them with food and forage ever since four o'clock—it is nine o'clock in the evening when the correspondent overhears the talk—they cannot get either food or forage.

Now, reflect upon this small incident.

Depend upon it, the food and forage were not left locked up, without any one to superintend them; but the superintendent was doubtless without the requisite authority to serve out the rations. Requisite, do I say? that is exactly the point, whether it was *requisite;* whether the circumstances did not constitute a sufficient requisition; but the superintendent was no doubt afraid to act. It is not routine which is ruinous; it is the fear of breaking through routine.

Sir Arthur. All the mischief proceeds from want of trust. I say always, if you employ me, trust me utterly. As the head of an office, whether political or permanent, do you think I wish to be extravagant? Do you think it would not be a pride and a pleasure to me, to do the greatest possible amount of work with the least possible expense? If I am not that kind of person—if I am not to be trusted, for goodness' sake don't employ me. The service of the State is not such a lovely service, that men who have not their bread to make, or who can get their bread in other ways, should undertake it.

Ellesmere. We are rather overpowered by

the official men present; and the one official man, from whom we could hope to hear the other side of the question, is silent.

Cranmer. There is a good deal in what they say; but they should have come to us at the Treasury in their difficulties. I am sure, at least in my time, we should never have been unreasonable in these little matters.

Sir Arthur. Come to you! Come to you in a matter that requires immediate settlement, and about which your lords would have replied to us in three weeks' time, and perhaps with a negative! Eh, Milverton?

Milverton. It is simply absurd, suffocatingly absurd.

Ellesmere. Well, there is one comfort, that when we have Milverton with us, we are sure to have sufficiently strong language, although he does pride himself upon being the justest of men.

Milverton. I have yet to learn that justice always uses smooth language.

Ellesmere. It is an awful thing to endeavour to penetrate through official reserve; but with my stupid, commonplace love for the concrete, I should like to know the case (I speak as a lawyer) in which Sir Arthur undertook an expenditure

which would now be cavilled at, and which saved many lives.

Sir Arthur. I don't mind telling you. [Here Sir Arthur related, in confidence, the incident in question.]

Ellesmere. Well, supposing your facts to be true—or rather, as I ought to say, your statements to be accurate—I think you have made out a case.

Milverton. Let me go back for a moment to the general question. Sir Arthur has been good enough to approve of what I have said about the difference in the question of expenditure of an individual and of the State. But I don't mind telling you confidentially, that I should almost be satisfied if the State behaved as judiciously in matters of expenditure, as most of the great employers of labour do. The great employers of labour, being mostly men of large minds and extended views, are wonderfully liberal in the recompence they give for good service. They understand the value of a man. They don't take him by examination in classics or mathematics; but they prove their man: and when he is proven, they hold to him. I don't mean to maintain that the State can, in every case, look after the

people it employs, as a private individual can; but it ought to aim at its service being at least equal, if not superior, to the service of private individuals. Reckless reduction, carried out with great individual suffering, is a thing which injures the whole of the public service, and damnifies it for a generation to come. The doing away with all prizes that can, by any possibility of screwing, be done away with in the public service, is most injurious to the encouragement of official talent. Of course the same principle applies to all the other services under the Government. In short, economy, to be successful, requires the utmost judgment, the utmost patience, the utmost tenderness; and will never be carried into practice wisely upon sudden spurts, and where the economizing person is bent upon showing that, during his brief tenure of office, he effected such and such signal reforms.

Sir Arthur. One thing I have to remark; and it is this:—They talk of the Manchester school. I suppose they mean the school which represents the trading interests of the country. Now, if there are any people who will be injured by injudicious economical reforms, it is those who represent the great trading interests of this

country. I can imagine that some old lady who lives upon an annuity, and has not many years to live, and who is childless, might gain something — a few sovereigns — from injudicious parsimony on the part of the Government; but the trading interests of the country, who thrive by action, and force, and development, will find themselves woefully mistaken, by adopting and furthering the starving system for the public service.

Lady Ellesmere. We ladies have been very silent during this discourse upon economy. I want, very presumptuously perhaps, to revert to the consideration of war. My good brother, Leonard, objects to the Prussian military system. He has shown us what injury it would produce if adopted here;—how you men would all be less clever as lawyers, chemists, doctors, and statesmen, if some years of your life were to be given to military training. Now, I want to know whether he objects to volunteering? I have a personal reason for asking. Our boy, John Leonard, who is, as you know, a tall boy of his age, though only sixteen, is beginning to tease me about his becoming a volunteer. What am I to say to him?

Milverton. By all means let him become a volunteer.

Lady Ellesmere. But won't this do him injury in his future career?

Milverton. Perhaps so; perhaps not. It may do him good service. Now, you mustn't think I am inconsistent, Mildred; for I really am not, and you would not think that I am, if I could thoroughly explain to you what I mean. I love the volunteers. I think we are immensely indebted to them. I think it is madness on our part not to further and favour them in every way. I am a volunteer myself—an honorary one; and I am proud to say that I was chairman of the committee that formed one of the most distinguished bodies of volunteers. I do not think there is anything I am prouder of than "my volunteers," as I always call them to myself. I admit that I am a very honorary volunteer, for I cannot carry myself — much less myself and a rifle—for three or four miles, without being dreadfully fatigued; but I have promised my corps that I would look after the commissariat, if ever they should be called into real action; and I have my eye upon all the corn-stacks and hay-stacks in the neighbourhood.

Ellesmere. What an outburst of enthusiasm from our daring and energetic friend!

Milverton. But, now to business—to answer the charge of inconsistency that I know you will bring against me.

Let those people, I say, volunteer, who have the disposition, the time, the means to do so; and recollect that a young man may, at one period of his life, have the disposition and the time and the means, that at another he has not. As regards John Leonard, he has not his total fortune to make. If John Leonard were the son of very poor parents, and were going to Scotland to learn agriculture from some skilful farmer there, I should be sorry to divert John Leonard, in a peremptory manner, from his avocation. In fact, without any more talk, there is just that difference, which is pretty nearly infinite, between what is compulsory and what is voluntary. The volunteer suits himself, and, in so doing, suits the State.

I suppose you will now let me return to the main branch of the subject which I originally intended to bring before you—namely, culture. I admit that there has been of late years a general diffusion of something like culture; but

the number of highly cultivated men, of men abreast with all the knowledge of their time, has not, I conceive, proportionately increased.

Ellesmere. There is very good reason for that, my dear fellow. Knowledge has been so much extended that you cannot expect the individual man to keep pace with it.

Sir Arthur. You forget, Ellesmere, that the means of acquiring knowledge have also immensely increased. Consider, for instance, the aids that there are now for acquiring classical knowledge; and how in former days a classical scholar had to do so much pioneer work which is now done for him.

Milverton. Think also of the number of questions which are settled, or which mankind have resolved not to fash themselves any more about.

Cranmer. At any rate we can take up a practical question which Milverton wants to set before us, and ascertain what a highly cultivated man of the present day might be expected to know.

Milverton. To begin with, there are a certain number of works which, if one aimed at being a cultivated man, one would like to have read in the original.

Ellesmere. Enumerate them; and, for goodness' sake, do not make the list too long.

Milverton. The works of Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Plato, Virgil, Horace, Dante, Cervantes, Le Sage, Molière and Goethe. I forbear to enumerate works written in the Eastern languages; but, at any rate, one would like to have read one's Old Testament in the original. Most of the works I have mentioned are untranslatable. Let all honour be given to the learned and accomplished men who have given us translations of these great works; but they would be the first to admit that these works should be read in the original by any one who aims at enjoying their full beauty.

Sir Arthur. It is worth while, I think, to remark, that it is not only the ancient works which are untranslatable, in Milverton's sense of the word, but the modern ones are just as much so. For instance, *Don Quixote.*

Milverton. Being aware of Ellesmere's proneness to object, I made my list a very short one. Of course I could have added twenty or thirty other works, in respect to which nearly the same assertion might be made.

But I want to put before you another part of

the subject, which weighs much upon me. It is this,—that I cannot call that man a highly cultivated man, in the present day, whose knowledge is confined alone to Literature, and does not embrace Science.

Conceive that there are intelligent creatures going about the world, highly placed, governing other people, making laws and interpreting them, who have not the slightest notion of the most elementary proposition in pure Science; and, what is more to the point, have not the slightest notion of the composition of earth, air, or water; and to whom the simplest properties of matter, or rather the laws which govern matter, are a mystery. To me, it is a wonder that mere curiosity does not lead such men—men, mark you, of the highest intelligence—to make some inquiry for themselves about the things which surround them.

Sir Arthur. Of course this is the result of a most defective education in early life.

Ellesmere. I beg leave to remark, Milverton, that if you choose to make the acquisition of ancient languages so important; if you won't let your highly cultivated man be content with reading his Plato in a translation; you have no right to expect him to be acquainted with Science. I do

not wish to make such an important discussion as this is, personal; but I must remind you again, Milverton, that you are one of those unfortunate persons gifted with an overpowering memory; and this will make you prone to set up an unreasonably high standard for your highly cultured man.

Milverton. It may be so. I believe, however, that a good memory is not an original gift. It is merely the result of an attention which anybody might give. However, to oblige you, I will give up Greek; and if I do, you will surely agree with me that Science ought to take its place. I put aside for the moment the beauty of scientific studies,—the exquisite enjoyment to be derived from refined calculations,—the delight of dealing with certainties. Looking back in life, I can hardly remember any pleasure so great as that of mastering some scientific problem. Here again, as a mere matter of intellectual curiosity, one would like to know what the supreme thinkers in the world have been endeavouring to think out. I always feel that the greatest intellectual surprise that any man can have, is that which he may experience in reading the first three sections of Newton. He

will acquire thereby a higher notion of the possibilities of human attainment.

Ellesmere. Never having tried, can't say; but am willing to believe. I wish, though, you knew something about Contingent Remainders. I think you would see something there, too, as regards the possibilities of human subtlety.

Milverton. But you see, Ellesmere, Contingent Remainders may in some state of human affairs be done away with; whereas Newton's three sections apply to the laws of the universe. Well, now, I am going to say something with which I fear that few of you, except the ladies, will agree. I cannot consider that man to be a highly cultured man, who does not know something of music. Here is the only universal language! Here is the language which can touch even the brute creation! Herein are subtleties of concord and discord, equivalent to the utmost refinements in language, and, as I believe, far surpassing the subtlety of Ellesmere's Contingent Remainders. How wonderful a thing music is, may be divined from the rarity of supreme success in it. Great poets are rare enough; but I think you will all admit that great musicians are rarer. And then, as I have said before, the thing is

universal. You may plead ignorance of Newton's works; you cannot plead entire ignorance of what Mozart has done: and probably not one of us men here present has the slightest notion even of the theory of music. However, the moment I get any time to spare, I mean to learn music.

CHAPTER II.

[In our last conversation we left off suddenly, music being the topic that was about to be discussed. But Mr. Milverton was called away to attend some justice business; an opportunity which was seized upon by Sir John Ellesmere, who, I think, hates long discussion of any kind, to propose a country walk. "It's no good waiting for Milverton," he said. "These men of mighty culture are always very weak about the legs. For my part, I like a man to be developed in all directions. What's the use of working your brains to that extent of dizzy confusion that you are afraid to look down from a height? And show me any learned man who can play well at hockey. Look at that sweet dog. She knows, as well as possible, that I am proposing to go out for a walk, and that Milverton won't go; and every movement in her body expresses

the misery of divided allegiance. But pleasure will prevail over duty, as it has, before now, once or twice, at least, in the course of the world's history. Our pretty Fairy will come with us, wagging her tail in a slow remorseful way, as she passes the room where Milverton is indifferently administering — very indifferently — country justice." So we went for our walk, leaving Mr. Milverton at home.

When we met next day for the purpose of renewing our conversation, Mr. Milverton and I could not for some time commence where we had left off. On this occasion it was Mr. Mauleverer's fault, who had been put into a great rage by a speech he had just been reading of an important politician. For Mr. Mauleverer to be in a passion, is a rare thing. He has, in general, an air of serene and unctuous contemptuousness. The conversation thus began.—]

Mauleverer. I declare solemnly——

Ellesmere. Please don't, Mauleverer. I never hear those words but I am sure that something very rash and very abusive is to follow.

Mauleverer. Nonsense, Ellesmere. I declare solemnly I would emigrate if I were a little

younger. This country will not be worth living in, if such people are to become powerful. Now-a-days any fellow may say anything, however injurious to a large class of his fellow-countrymen, with the chance of its being well received, if he can express himself well, and make a tolerable speech "to split the ears of the groundlings," as Shakespeare has it.

Milverton. It all proceeds from want of culture.

Cranmer. I really don't see that. Surely it requires some culture to make a good speech.

Milverton. Want of general culture is what I mean, Cranmer. If more people were more highly cultured in this respect, so that the power of making good speeches was more generally diffused, the exorbitant influence now possessed by the few who can speak well would be diminished. Besides, if there were more general culture, there would be fewer "groundlings" having ears to be split, or, as I should say, tickled, by mere ability in speech-making. I say this, much against my own interest, for if there is anything in the world I can do, it is to make a speech. In fact, as you know, I never write anything, but always speak what I have to indite.

Ellesmere. Yes; I often think what a blessing it has been for the world that you never were in parliament. There would have been one more fellow there who could talk for any given time on any given subject. And we have quite enough of them already. If I were the Sovereign, I would never call any statesman to my councils, who had not shown that for some one session he could be totally silent.

Sir Arthur. It is a beautiful thing—silence—Sir John. Let us show that we estimate the fulness of its beauty by indulging in long "flashes of silence" while Milverton resumes his discourse upon culture.

Ellesmere. I cannot promise to do anything of the kind. I cannot hear all manner of fallacies and exaggerations put forward, and neglect my duty by not contradicting, or controverting them at the time. I don't make speeches. I only make judicious interruptions and crushing rejoinders. Crushed herbs are sweet, we know; and, if Milverton has anything to say worth hearing, his lucubrations must be capable of developing sweetness when subjected to the slightly crushing process caused by my poor and feeble objections.

Lady Ellesmere. Please don't be so modest, John; anything but that.

Ellesmere. Instead of sneering at me, you ought to be thankful to me; for you would all be overpowered by those two authors, Sir Arthur and Milverton, if there were not some person representing the outer world, some *extern*, as the Catholics would say, to keep them a little in order. But go on, Milverton. Where were we?

Milverton. I was endeavouring to incite you all to learn music, having told you that it was the only universal language—that even the brutes understood something of it, and rejoiced in it; that the deepest subtleties of composition and expression might be displayed by it; that it was a universal solvent; that it could move men sooner than anything else to pity, sorrow, joy, or indignation; that it formed one of the finest and most delicate means of sympathy; above all, that it was a most valuable kind of education, and that it evolved humility.

Ellesmere. Good gracious! I never heard a word of this. I should have protested vigorously if I had. I suppose Milverton fired off all these fine things at the poor woman who came to complain that her husband had beaten her black

and blue (no doubt she deserved it). And how astonished she must have been when Milverton, in his musical frenzy, told her that if she had known how to play one of Sebastian Bach's fugues in E sharp, this evil thing would never have befallen her. But to maintain that music evolves humility is coming it a little too strong. What on earth are you young women laughing at? I declare, the longer I live, the more convinced I am that my little friend, Master Henry Spoffell, aged nine years, is one of the wisest of human beings.

Cranmer. Who is this infant prodigy, and what wisdom has he taught Sir John? I don't perceive that the wisdom of people of riper age produces much effect upon Ellesmere's obdurate nature.

Ellesmere. Young Henry is a son of a friend of mine at our Bar. I went down to Brighton some time ago, and took the boy out for a treat on a Sunday afternoon. But I must describe him to you. He is a very little fellow, with a very big head, on which he wears a very big hat. He has a tail-coat, and carries a stick. In short, he is as like his papa as a gherkin is to a full-grown cucumber. We walked up and

down the pier discoursing about many things, including the great question as to whether modern toffy is equal to ancient toffy—that is, to the toffy of my time. Suddenly he changed the subject, and said to me, "Do you like the girls?" Now this would have been an embarrassing question to some people; but I dashed off an answer at once, "Yes, I rather like them, Harry; they are very well in their way." "I don't," he said; "they giggle so." Doubtless some of the girls, as they passed us on the pier, had been moved to giggling by the droll appearance of the little man. But, upon reflection, I perceive the full force and depth of his remark, taken generally. What was there in anything I said just now to provoke my wife and Mrs. Milverton to this intemperate fit of giggling? The men were all as grave as mustard-pots.

Lady Ellesmere. It only shows their ignorance. Who could help giggling, as you call it, Sir, at hearing such nonsense talked about music?

One of the pleasant remarks which John often makes to me, with a magisterial air, is, "Never talk about things, my dear, which you do not thoroughly understand. Nod your head one way or the other, but do not say anything." It would

have been well if John had nodded his head, instead of talking about a musical composition in E sharp. There is no such thing.

Ellesmere. I have no doubt there is such a thing; but such elevated composition has not yet reached your half-tutored ears. For my part, I am resolved never to compose in any key but E sharp.

Lady Ellesmere. By the way, are you quite sure, John, that when the girls giggled, as they met you and little Henry on the pier, it was only at *his* droll appearance that they giggled?

Ellesmere. I know that it is only the wife of one's bosom who would think of making such an ill-natured suggestion. But never mind her nonsense, Milverton. How, I ask, does music evolve humility?

Milverton. One of the first things to encourage in mankind is reverence. One of the most likely things to promote reverence, is an appreciation of the immense differences that exist in the capacities of different individuals. Now there are but few people who have the requisite knowledge to appreciate the enormous difference between Newton's capacity and their own. But there are many who have some means of appreciating the

difference between a Beethoven, or a Mozart, and themselves. They must be aware that there are heights of the capacity for musical creativeness, which they can only look up to, but can never hope to climb. Hence the study of music promotes reverence—and thus promotes humility, in a larger extent, perhaps, than any other form of culture, inasmuch as the knowledge of music—at least of what has been accomplished in music—is more widely diffused amongst all classes than a similar knowledge in any other department of science. I have no doubt that the culture of music amongst the Germans has been of immense service as regards the general culture of the Teutonic mind.

Ellesmere. We practical English can do without so much of this musical culture.

Milverton. Well, I will return to what you call practical things. Nobody has a greater contempt than I have for some of the conclusions that so-called political economists have come to; but it is only because they have not known how to wed political economy to real life—a marriage which, like many other marriages, might be very felicitous, but is not so. I can hardly look upon an English gentleman as a cultured man who

has not read his *Adam Smith*. Then metaphysics—then theology. What great works there are in these two branches of knowledge!

Ellesmere. Knowledge! Should we not rather say guess-work?

Milverton. Have it as you like: bring me always down to the practical. Don't you think it would be well if some of us men, who pretend to be cultivated, knew a little more about physiology? Don't you think we should govern ourselves and other people a little better? I think I have noticed that those men who know something of this subject, have an extreme objection to leaden pellets being propelled into the human body, of the delicacies and beauties of which they understand something.

Mauleverer. I should like to say a word for astronomy.

Sir Arthur. And I for mechanics.

Ellesmere. Dr. Johnson makes Rasselas exclaim, "I see that it is impossible to be a poet!" So I say it is impossible to be one of Milverton's cultured men.

There is an injunction in one of Lord Chesterfield's letters, which I have learnt by heart. Indeed, I may say I have learnt it by carrying

into practice most of its requisitions. Lord Chesterfield orders his son to be "well-bred without ceremony, easy without negligence, steady and intrepid with modesty, genteel without affectation, insinuating without meanness, cheerful without being noisy, frank without indiscretion, and secret without mysteriousness; to know the proper time and place for whatever you say or do, and to do it with an air of condition." I flatter myself that I have entirely acquired the art of doing everything with an air of condition; but even I have not yet attained the perfection of behaviour inculcated by the politest of peers. Much less can I hope, in this short and transitory life, vexed by many bores, by obscure telegrams, by London dinner-parties, and London evening-parties, to become the man of perfect culture, according to the lines laid down for constructing that admirable creature by our exacting friend and host. I give it up entirely.

But that is no reason why the rest of you should not hear and give good heed to what Milverton will tell you.

Cranmer. Oh, don't be so down-hearted, Sir John. Seeing how successful you have been in acquiring all the arts of politeness, I

think you need not despair of becoming a well-informed man, even although Milverton should make his standard a very lofty one.

Ellesmere. Not merely lofty—inaccessible—at least for a poor fellow like me, subject to all these interruptions I have spoken of, and also being very married.

But, to descend to particulars. Here am I, as ignorant as Fairy of the first principles of Science; and how can you expect me, at my time of life, to master any branch of Science? It is impossible.

Milverton. That I deny. Now, for instance, what time do you suppose it takes to learn something—something well worth knowing—of chemistry? I don't mean to be able to perform delicate experiments; but to ascertain something of the nature of the things which surround you, and to appreciate the exquisite exactitude of the physical laws under which we live.

Ellesmere. Three years?

Milverton. Three months. I do not mean to say that a boy would do this in three months; but a man, practised in the art of learning, would.

Ellesmere. How fond you ought to be of competitive examination.

Milverton. As you well know, I am not at all fond of it; and one of the strongest reasons for my dislike of it, is, that it tends to prevent culture. By it, you insert into a youth's mind, not the idea that knowledge is a beautiful thing in itself: but, that its main use is for self-advancement. You throw the acquisition of knowledge into the domain of business. You disgust the young with knowledge. Often as it has been quoted, I quote again for your edification, what Lord Bacon says.

[I cannot find the passage which Mr. Milverton quoted, and I do not like to ask him about it, as he is deeply engaged on some work which occupies his whole mind. I recollect that the passage was something of this kind:—that knowledge was not this, and not that, and not the other—that, for instance, it was not a terrace for a vain man to pace up and down upon; but that it was something for the glory of God, and the relief of man's estate. I am certain of those last words—"the relief of man's estate;" and they probably will recall the passage to the minds of any of my readers who may be versed in Bacon's works.]

Do you perceive, in that passage, any signs

of approval of competitive examination? The man with a real love of knowledge, delights, as Bacon did, in the idea that all men should know what he knows. He revels in the sympathy of men of knowledge. He wishes everybody to be able to aid him in discovering the "open secret" of nature. He pits himself, not against his fellow-labourers, but against nature.

Ellesmere. I should like to work this question out with you a little. Do I understand you, that you object to examinations generally as a means of ascertaining the qualifications of an individual?

Milverton. No: but I object to making them competitive; or rather, to speak accurately, I object to making them too severely competitive.

There is a common metaphor, which I always make use of when talking on this subject. It is the putting up of a bar for men or horses to leap over. Put up your bar if you like. In other words, settle a standard of qualification; and say that it shall be needful for a youth to come up to that standard before he is permitted to enter the Army, the Navy, or the Civil Service; but do not pit one youth against another individually. I object very strongly to the Cambridge system, by which you endeavour

to give every man his exact place; this must make competition very fierce. There will always be sufficient competition in the world: we need not increase it artificially.

Now look what an evil the competitive spirit is, when carried to a great excess. We have resolved to allow, and, whether we had so resolved or not, we cannot help allowing the present war to be fully in our minds at the present moment. What is the cause of that war—the *vera causa*, as Lord Bacon would have said? It is that a people cannot be content with saying to a neighbouring people—"we are very brave; you are very brave: we are very powerful; you are very powerful: let us agree to respect one another, and to keep our hands off from one another." But no: it must be ascertained, absolutely ascertained, by competitive examination, which is the braver and which is the more powerful.

As I have often ventured to say to you, there is nothing so much wanted in the world, as for a man, or a body of men, to be content to be second. I need hardly point out that such a contentment would fulfil one of the noblest aims of Christianity.

Sir Arthur. I also think, Milverton, and in this I know you will agree with me, that this contentment would insure a greater amount of knowledge and proficiency.

Milverton. Yes : if you carry competition to its uttermost, you inevitably destroy individuality.

Ellesmere. Big words; but I do not exactly see what they mean.

Cranmer. Nor I.

Milverton. I suppose you will admit that, for almost everybody, there is something in which he could especially excel. If you press competition to its uttermost, you never allow sufficient time or thought to be given for the development of each man's peculiar aptitude. He must know what others know. There is no subject which he can afford to neglect, and no subject to which he can afford to give peculiar attention.

Now, as regards another matter, I suppose you will also admit, that envy is one of the worst things in the world.

Envy mostly enters where close competition leads the way. The greater men, it is true, escape this vice. One of the sure signs of greatness is freedom from envy. But as regards the

mass of mankind, they will have envy developed in them, almost in the same proportion that you encourage individual competition.

Sir Arthur. There is nothing probably of which people are so envious, as of fame.

Returning to war, I always think what an apt illustration it is, of the accidental way in which fame is gained, to see how the name of some insignificant village suddenly becomes a renowned historical name, because it has been in or near the scene of battle.

Ellesmere. We generally read that the village is in flames.

Sir Arthur. Yes: not only is fame an accidental thing, but mostly an unfortunate thing.

Mauleverer. Very good, Sir Arthur. To speak the language of the mathematicians, fame is chiefly a function of misfortune. You can hardly point out any very famous man in history, whose latter days have not been clouded with misfortune, unless indeed, like Cæsar, he has been assassinated in the full flush of his good fortune.

Milverton. I could:—but how about the eminent men in Literature?

Mauleverer. Oh! they only write because they are miserable—miserable for themselves or

for others—except those who write for money, and surely they are miserable enough!

Ellesmere. I wish to interrupt this dolorous discourse, and to say something which has nothing whatever to do with the subject, but which has just come into my mind. You see our dog, Fairy. Please regard her with admiration.

Cranmer. Why? we always regard Fairy with admiration, but why to-day especially?

Ellesmere. Because Fairy, like all the rest of the good animals, makes use only of those weapons of offence and defence which nature has gifted her with. And her pretty teeth she only tries upon boys. Don't you, Fairy? It is only ourselves, and the rest of the simious tribe, who carry arms or make use of missiles. The monkeys, you know, will throw down cocoa-nuts at you. If I had been consulted, I do not think I should have given hands to any of the animals, man included—at least, not until their heads had been better trained to make good use of such a potential thing as a hand.

Milverton. Putting aside Ellesmere's ill-natured remark——

Ellesmere. Suppose wasps had hands, what a life they would lead us.

Milverton. Putting aside Ellesmere's ill-

natured remark, I revert to the subject we were discussing. What a different thing is the desire of knowledge from the desire of fame! It always surprises me that men can go through the world —clever men—who seem to have no desire to understand what they see about them. Now here is a safe passion—the passion for knowledge —which you might encourage in mankind to the uttermost; and it is an unenvious passion. Here is Ellesmere, who knows nothing of Arabic; but his mind is set on attaining the first place at the Bar. What will that profit you hereafter, Ellesmere? whereas one can hardly imagine the soul divorced from its knowledge.

Ellesmere. This is all very fine; but the body objects exceedingly to being divorced from the utmost amount of pounds, shillings, and pence it can accumulate.

Sir Arthur. To use a witticism, which was much current last year, the most obdurate metals will melt, you know, Ellesmere, in that place to which most of the eminent lawyers are hastening.

Ellesmere. It seems to me that those persons who delight so much in polite culture, can be very rude.

But how about women, Milverton? Would

not a little competition be good for them? Milverton is very discreet, not to say cunning, in all that he has ever said about women's claims, women's rights, women's education, and the like, which we hear such a din about nowadays.

Milverton. You are quite right, Ellesmere; not cunning though—discreet. When I write, or talk about anything, I have always a strong wish, perhaps a stupid one, to bring people over to my way of thinking; so I generally avoid needless controversy as much as I can. But I have no objection to enter upon this subject. I will begin with an axiom—that is, with something which is an axiom in my mind. Women are in many things our superiors, in many things our inferiors —our equals never. I hold with Coleridge, that there are souls masculine and souls feminine. If I were suddenly asked to give a proof of the goodness of God to us, I think I should say that it is most manifest in the exquisite difference He has made between the souls of men and women; so as to create the possibility of the most comforting and charming companionship that the mind of man can imagine.

Ellesmere. What will your friend John Stuart Mill say to all this?

Milverton. I admire John Mill amazingly as a human being; and though I see but little of him, I feel very much attached to him. But I do not always agree with his views. Now, I will take one point of difference which affects this question. He would say, I believe, if he were here, "you speak of women as they are, not as they might be, if they were properly cultured."

I believe that careful investigation would furnish a complete answer to this argument of his. I will take a particular case. For one man who understands the rudiments of music, there are, at least, three or four hundred women who do so. Do they create in it? Where is there a Frau Beethoven, a Frau Mozart, a Signora Bellini, a Signora Rossini, a Madame Auber? It is a most audacious thing for me to say, but I feel as certain of it as that I am here; that if I knew as much of music as most of the ladies of my acquaintance, I should assuredly use that knowledge for invention. I could not go on, playing other people's ideas. This is one of the marked differences between men and women—the exceeding audacity of the one, the exceeding sweet timidity and prudence of the other. I don't believe that this difference

will be essentially altered by any change in the "regiment of women."

Ellesmere. I must interrupt, and say that as to audacity——

Milverton. Now don't talk nonsense, Ellesmere. Was it a woman, do you think, who first constructed a boat? or, what is still more audacious, first set foot in it upon the water?

Ellesmere. As to that, I admit that probably it was not a woman who first eat an oyster.

Sir Arthur. Milverton is right, according to my judgment.

Lady Ellesmere. But let us hear, Leonard, about those things in which we are superior.

Milverton. You know them, my dear, as well as I do. Everybody knows them. It is talking common-place to talk about them. You are superior in quiet endurance, in niceness of demeanour, in proprieties of all kinds, in delicate perceptions of all kinds—especially of character—in domestic prudence, in constancy; and, what is greatest of all, in not allowing your affections, or your admirations, to be dulled or diminished by familiarity. Really I do not think there is anybody who admires women more than I do.

Lady Ellesmere. That is a prelude, Blanche,

I have no doubt, to his commencing the chapter on our inferiorities.

Milverton. Yes it is, my dear. You are inferior to us in the sense of justice, in daring, in originality, and, generally, in greatness. You have minor defects too. You are not so pleasant to one another as men are. The art of nagging, and of being generally disagreeable, when you choose, are yours in perfection. Decidedly you are more unforgiving than we are.

Ellesmere. What about their reasoning powers ?

Milverton. These are very great.

Ellesmere. This is a new theory.

Milverton. Why you really don't suppose, Ellesmere, that women can't reason quite as well as men ?

Ellesmere. I may be very foolish, but I had always supposed something of the kind.

Milverton. Oh no; it's quite a mistake. Some of the finest reasoners that have ever lived have been women. What you perceive in them, that makes you think they cannot reason as well as men, is this, that they decline to abide by the decisions of reason. They introduce the affections of the soul, when we, in our poor,

creeping way, are content to abide by the conclusions of logic. You argue with a woman. I can tell you, she appreciates all your arguments; and, at the end of your discourse, is frequently wont to repeat her original opinion in exactly the same words as she first used in stating it. But this is because she does not choose to be convinced.

Ellesmere. Well, I do believe there really is something in what you say; but it makes them out to be inferior animals, which is all that I care to prove.

Milverton. No, it does not. Altogether it is a most beautiful arrangement, showing again the wisdom of Creation. I will tell you why.

Women were made inferior to men in physical strength. If they had been made exactly amenable to our ways of reasoning, they would have had too little hold upon us. Whereas now, being really resolved to rule, as all we men are, at least in serious matters, we are obliged to guide and govern women—when we do guide and govern them——

Ellesmere. It is well to put in that proviso.

Milverton. To guide and govern them, when we do guide and govern them, through their affec-

tions, so that we are obliged perpetually to pay court to them, which, as I intimated before, is a very beautiful arrangement.

Ellesmere. I see. The irrationality of women is another proof of the wisdom and goodness of Providence. That is, according to the Milvertonian view of the matter.

Sir Arthur. I think the Milvertonian view, as you call it, is a very charming view, and I believe it to be a correct one.

Mauleverer. It may be true, but it gives one a very miserable notion of the construction of human society: namely, that we are to live with creatures, and to be immensely dependent upon them (almost all cookery is thrown into their hands), with respect to whom we are to encounter the perpetual fatigue of winning their affections, if we are to persuade them to act reasonably,—that is, according to our view of reason, which may be a most imperfect one.

Lady Ellesmere. I am thoroughly puzzled. I do not know whether to accept this view of the question, or not. There seems to be a great deal of truth in it, but yet it places us upon a lower level.

I could have said exactly a similar thing for

our side. I know that when I want to persuade John to do anything which I am certain the right rules of reason should compel him to assent to, I am often obliged to coax him a little; which I suppose corresponds with that process which Leonard calls winning the affections, and which is so tiresome and fatiguing, according to my husband and Mr. Mauleverer.

Ellesmere. Mauleverer said nothing about "tiresome." That is the way in which women always contrive to introduce something foreign to the discussion. Notwithstanding Milverton's assertion as to their powers of reasoning, the power of keeping to the point is not one which they manifest.

Cranmer. We shall never agree upon this matter. We may differ considerably about war; but, at any rate, there is more chance of our coming to agreement about that, than there is about our agreeing in any conclusions respecting the rights, claims, privileges, immunities, and intellectual merits of women. It is very ungallant of me, perhaps; but, should I ever come back to office, I do not wish to have them as clerks in the Treasury; for, unfortunately, I am not a man skilled in guiding or governing anybody by the

affections. I resign that form of guidance to the supreme suavity of Sir John Ellesmere.

Sir Arthur. I have not read the news in to-day's papers. And it is dangerous to talk about the war, without having read the morning's news; for, otherwise, one may put forth the most intelligent and carefully-considered opinions which are flatly contradicted and shown to be absurd and irrelevant by the latest telegrams.

Milverton. The news to-day is most remarkable. It is not that it chronicles any great event of siege or battle; but it shows what wonderful powers of arrangement and what prevision have been brought into action by the Germans. It appears that there are, at least, 650,000 of them on the soil of France, at a considerable distance from their base of operations; and yet all these people are amply provided with food and ammunition, and the horses with forage. It is an immense triumph of forethinking organization.

Sir Arthur. While we are talking about war, I will tell you one thought which I have always had about it,—a very presumptuous thought you will probably say, but it is one to which I hold most strongly. I think it is nonsense to talk of any especial military talent. I

am not alone in this view. One of the most eminent of modern statesmen holds it also.

Cranmer. I don't understand exactly what you mean.

Sir Arthur. I mean that I object to the common notion that a great military commander possesses certain qualifications peculiarly fitting him for the conduct of military affairs, and that these qualifications are seldom possessed even by the most distinguished men in civil affairs. It appears to me, on the contrary, that all business, military as well as civil, should be conducted much in the same manner, and requires much the same qualifications to conduct it well. If there is anything special required for military command, it is apprehensiveness. I think you will find that all great commanders have possessed this quality in a high degree. It is the want of this quality which has led to so many of the French defeats.

Milverton. I quite agree with your notion, Sir Arthur, that there is no wonderful difference between the qualities that make men excel in military command and those which make them excel when placed in power as civilians; except, perhaps, that there is something required in

action—on the day of battle, for instance—which requires some especial qualifications in a commander.

Ellesmere. I do not see this. I know what you mean;—rapidity of decision upon change of circumstance. This quality is wanted in civil life too. It is needful to make a great debater, a wise councillor, a good lawyer. I think you are right, Sir Arthur, in challenging anybody to maintain that generalship requires extraordinary qualifications.

Sir Arthur. Well, this emboldens me to say something which I should not otherwise have ventured to say, even to such intimate friends as you are. You know I am the least military of mortal men, being merely a student and a politician: but I declare to you (don't laugh at me), that I think I showed this military talent, which Milverton calls apprehensiveness, in considering the present campaign. Like the rest of the world, I took down my maps when the war began, and looked at them carefully. I made up my mind that there was immense danger to the French from the possible movement of the Prussians through the Vosges. I should instantly, if I had been in command of the

French, have provided against that movement. You may laugh if you like, but I assure you this is not an afterthought. My little daughter, if she were here, would tell you that "Papa was always talking about the Vosges."

Milverton. I quite believe you, Sir Arthur; and I have no doubt that you were not alone in this apprehensive thought, but that hundreds thought the same.

Ellesmere. It ought always to be remembered, but is very frequently forgotten, that the Great Napoleon was not a Frenchman. He seems to me to have been an apt representative of the genius of the Italians.

Milverton. Quite true, Ellesmere.

By the way, there is not anything so important for a nation as to be well aware of its peculiar characteristics, and to guard against the defects which its specialities lay it open to.

I must tell you an anecdote, which I think singularly illustrates one of the characteristics of the French. Our friend, George Lewis, told it to me years ago; and I wish I could tell it to you as well as he told it.

An intelligent Frenchman came to pay him, or some friend of his, a visit. In the room there

was a large map of Europe over the chimney-piece. The Englishman and the Frenchman sat down before the fire. After some ordinary talk, they began to look up at the map, and to comment upon it.

Now, you know, in any map of Europe, how Russia seems to overhang the rest of Europe, like a great thundercloud. The Frenchman made these extraordinary remarks, "At first sight, no doubt, the movement would appear likely to come from there." Thus saying, he pointed to huge Russia.

"*Mais non!* it seems to me evident that the movement must come from there;" and, as he spoke, he pointed to small France.

Now, if the friends had been considering anything else but a map; if it had been a French book, or a French work of art, or a speech in the French Chambers, there might have been some "discourse of reason" in remarking that, "from France must come the movement which shall dominate the world."

But the map!—but of all things else, the map. How could any rational being discern in the map that "the movement" must come from France?

I have often thought over this anecdote, which was passed on to me when it was quite warm, when the conversation had just taken place. And I have thought what a remarkable difference it indicates between English and French nature. I suppose that there is not an Englishman in the world, who, looking at the map of Europe, does not feel somewhat appalled by the relative smallness of his own country, and astonished that "the movement has ever come from his small island."

To use the expression of our friend Carlyle, "the imagination of a Frenchman seems sometimes to be divorced from fact."

Lady Ellesmere. All you gentlemen seem to do little else than philosophize about this war, entering deeply into national character, and matters of that kind; but you seem to lose sight of the horrors of it, and these are the things which oppress our poor feminine minds the most. But then we are so "deficient in greatness," you know.

Milverton. If I am to dwell upon the horrors of the war, I must adopt an astronomical illustration, which I have tried on you before.

Ellesmere. Now don't go into abtruse cal-

culations. "My education was completed," as the late Lord Derby used to say, "in the pre-scientific period." I wish I had been brought up as a national schoolboy. You hear them asked some such question as this: 2,375 yards of taffety, at 3*s.* 6½*d.* a yard? The clever little wretches at once advance forward, stretching out their arms like pump-handles, to show that they can answer the question, if their master will only allow them to do so. Whereas I keep thinking all the time, what a difficulty it would be for me to answer the question at all, even with the assistance of my wife and my clerk; and yet you must admit I am rather a clever fellow, as you all have reason to know.

Milverton. Want of culture, you see:—want of early culture. But now to proceed with my astronomical illustration. What I wish to show is, that there are hardly any of us who properly appreciate figures.

When, on an unclouded night, Ellesmere, you look up into the heavens, how many stars do you see?

Ellesmere. Do you remember what Charles Lamb said when the schoolmaster asked him whether he had ever made any calculation as

to the value of the rental of all the retail shops in London?

If, he said, he had asked me what song the sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, I might have "hazarded a wide solution." And so say I on the present occasion. Not but that I have some statistical ideas. If you were to tell me of any "long, unlovely street," as Tennyson says, in which there are seven hundred and fifty-three married men, I could tell you pretty accurately about the relations of domination that exist between them and their wives. There are six hundred who are entirely managed by their wives; there are one hundred and fifty foolish ones, who are always wrangling and jangling for the mastery; and there are only three who manage their wives without beating them. But then these three are nearly always away from home, being captains of vessels. I am a dab at some kinds of calculations, you see; but, as regards the stars, I have no skill in estimating their number, or anything else about them.

Milverton. But try, Ellesmere; think over it, and try.

Ellesmere. Well, if I must say something,

I should say, that on such a night as you describe, I see 157,283 stars. I make it odd numbers, because that looks scientific; but I suppose it is hundreds of thousands.

Milverton. The utmost you ever see is three thousand.

Ellesmere. Oh, that is the sort of thing one might tell a young woman, when one is making love to her on a moonlight night, and when she will believe anything one says. That time of facile credence however soon passes away, according to my experience. But you must not try such a preposterous statement on us middle-aged men. I know I see more than three thousand.

Milverton. No, you don't. What you do not know, is, what a large number is three thousand. You have really no idea of three thousand. Am I not right, Mauleverer, about the stars?

Mauleverer. Yes.

Sir Arthur. I speak with all submission, in the presence of you scientific people; but I am, for once, entirely of Ellesmere's way of thinking, or rather of imagining.

Milverton. Let us give them, Mauleverer, a proof of what we have been saying. I forget the

exact figures, but I will take care to overstate them, rather than the contrary. There are, at the utmost, only five thousand nine hundred stars which are visible to the naked eye. Now I suppose you will admit that you can only see at one time one hemisphere; and, supposing the stars to be equally distributed, you can only see two thousand nine hundred and fifty.

Three thousand is your maximum; but you have so poor an idea of three thousand, that you can hardly believe this.

Ellesmere. I am silenced, but not convinced. I am quite feminine in this matter. I disdain facts and figures, and hold to my own opinion still.

Milverton. Now; having appreciated, to some extent, how large a number three thousand really is, imagine a dead or wounded man in the place of each one of those stars. It would be a good many wretched beings to mourn over. Now imagine that you could travel from hemisphere to hemisphere of different worlds, and see, one after another, a hundred hemispheres of these horrid constellations of dead and wounded men. Thus you might attain to some notion of the injury to life already caused by this war. I made a calcula-

tion, some little time ago, of the room those who are entirely *hors de combat* would take up; and, if I recollect rightly, I found that you might pass along a line of them, arranged on both sides of the road in beds three feet wide, without any interval, from London to Dover. It is worth while, I think, sometimes to go into these somewhat fanciful modes of illustrating the enormous evils and sufferings caused by war.

Cranmer. I saw the other day that some one had made a calculation of the agricultural losses occasioned by this war, and they amounted, in money, to 170,000,000*l.*

Sir Arthur. It is a great advantage to us, that we have Milverton as one of our company, because he always starts us with some one subject that is predominant for the time in his mind; and, as everybody must have noticed, when you have one subject before you, much of what you see, or hear, or read, seems all at once to have an unaccountable reference to that one subject.

Ellesmere. Oh yes! It is a great advantage to have Milverton boring-on upon one subject, because it is so delightful to make excursions from it, and to diverge into a hundred other things. There is all the pleasure of naughti-

ness in this divergence. It has the sweetness of forbidden fruit.

Cranmer. I don't like it at all. I like to keep to one subject, and to work that out well. But I know that to attempt this is hopeless when certain persons are with us.

Ellesmere. Why not say at once, a certain person?

Sir Arthur. What I am going to say now, touches nearly the two great subjects we have been discussing—namely, Culture and War.

I suppose we have all read our newspaper lately with an eagerness and intentness unknown to us before. We have already said something about newspaper writing; but I mean to say something more. Milverton began our conversation with an intimation that he was going to dwell upon our deficiency in culture. I think that our newspaper-writing is an astounding instance to the contrary. You easily see how this doctrine of mine bears upon the question of the present war. I declare solemnly, to use Mauleverer's favourite expression, I declare solemnly that I think that the misfortunes of the French are to be attributed more to their bad newspaper-writing than to bad generalship,

to insufficient preparation, or to almost any other cause that you can name.

Now, look at our own newspapers. Do you not feel as certain as possible, that if our statesmen were to put forth false intelligence, inflated manifestoes, wild proclamations, or to conduct themselves in the most unseemly and unpatriotic manner in their assemblies, the newspapers, as at present constituted, would be down upon them in a moment?

Nay more, if our chief literary men were to write as wildly as some of the chief literary men in France have written at the present crisis, our newspapers, instead of backing them, would ridicule them and keep them in order.

Cranmer. I don't love newspapers, for they are always so hard upon us official men; but I think you are right, Sir Arthur, in what you imagine about them, and that they really would curb extravagance of every kind.

Milverton. I must own, Sir Arthur, that there is a great deal in what you say. I was thinking, however, when I introduced the subject of culture, of individual culture. But, to return to newspapers. I think I fully appreciate the wonderful things done by the daily press, as, for

instance, the goodness of the articles, evidently written in the small hours of the night after a debate in the House of Commons. But what astonishes me most is the weekly press. The quantity of thought expressed in it is amazing. I will show you what I mean. Sandy, just give me that paper which is on the table.

Now let me enumerate the subjects it treats of. First there is an article on "The War," which seems to me to be very good. Then there is a thoughtful article upon "Italy and Rome." Then one upon "The German Conditions of Peace," which appears to give a very fair view of the case.

Now take a single sentence in it. "Victor Hugo and Michelet shared with Béranger and Thiers the guilt of exciting two generations of Frenchmen to repeat the crimes of the empire by the robbery of the Rhine." Is not that a true statement, and a very significant one? Then there is an article on "The Ministry and the Democrats." Then an article entitled "Sir Henry Bulwer on Mediation." Then one on "The Future Constituent Assembly." I would not say that I agree with everything in these articles; but I must admit that there is a great

deal in them. Then comes an article upon Mr. Bruce. I do not think that this is a just article, whatever may be its merits as a clever piece of composition.

Sir Arthur. I suppose you will admit with me, Milverton, that the man has not yet been born who can for any long time fill the appointment of Home Secretary with satisfaction to the murmuring public.

Milverton. No; that phœnix has not yet arisen in the world.

Ellesmere. I tell you what, my fine fellows, you don't know what it is to be Attorney or Solicitor-General. Those unhappy functionaries have to be acquainted with all earthly and heavenly affairs, and to be ready at a moment's notice to give a sound legal opinion upon them.

Milverton. Those potent personages are not so much before the world as the Home Secretary is. Their great functions are rather dark: his are conducted under that "fierce light" which "beats" upon the Home Office, as it does upon the Throne.

But you must let me resume my description of this periodical. I don't care if it fatigues or bores you. Its very length will prove the

truth of what I say. After the cruel usage of Mr. Bruce, comes an elaborate article on "The War of 1870," written, I should guess, by a learned soldier. Then come what are called the social articles, any one of which would have delighted and astonished our ancestors, accustomed to weak *Tatlers* and verbose *Ramblers*.

Ellesmere. Astonished, probably.

Milverton. These articles are headed "Good Advice," "Popping the Question on the Stage," and "Village Politics in France." With regard to the last-named article, I do really believe that there is more knowledge shown in it of the French peasantry than almost any literary man in France could produce. I say literary *man* advisedly; for George Sand seems to me to have a profound knowledge of peasant life. Now I will read you a bit from this article :—

"The peasant is nowhere an easy person to become really acquainted with, and the French peasant is the least easy of all. He is far pleasanter to talk to than his English namesake, but he is just as distrustful. He has a sort of animal secrecy and wariness; and in the presence of men of better station and education than him-

self, although he is quite ready to display a democratic consciousness of equality, which would be odd on this side of the Channel, he has all the caution and reticence of intuitive fear. Books help us very little indeed. Nine out of ten French novels never stir beyond the Parisian boulevards; and the few that do, with one illustrious exception, either confine themselves, like Balzac, to country towns, or invent imaginary scenes of country innocence and repose. Perhaps the one person who knows the French peasant best is the Englishman who wanders from village to village, with knapsack on his back."

Then there is an article, showing great research, upon "The Protests against the Vatican Degree;" then "Army Organization" is discussed; then comes an article of antiquarian research; then "Pawnbroking" is elaborately discussed; then "The Drama;" then there are several reviews of English books. Finally there is an elaborate review of French Literature, in which thirteen or fourteen French works are carefully considered.

We are accustomed to this kind of thing, and hardly realize the astonishing nature of it. This is but one of the weekly productions. It

happened to be the one on the table. There are others, in their way, quite as astonishing.

Sir Arthur. And do you not admit, Milverton, that if our statesmen were to deviate into folly and excitement, these fellows would do their best to keep us right?

Milverton. Yes: but there is something to be said on the other side; namely, that so much good writing, which of course mainly takes the form of criticism, always tends to check vigorous action on the part of those who have to act.

Mauleverer. Very true, Milverton; very true: you cannot develop any one form of human thought and endeavour, without somewhat injuring all the rest.

Ellesmere. Pleasant creature, this! Goldsmith's Croaker was an encouraging fellow when compared with him!

Mauleverer. You all go on so fast, you seem to me always to have your thoughts at the tip of your tongues, so that I have no chance with you. When I do get in a few words, I am obliged to make them pretty strong. As for Milverton, I am positively ashamed of him. Something is said, which hits him very hard, or which at least ought to hit him very hard, and which he ought to feel;

and, instead of rejecting it, he receives it with the utmost placidity, just because it enables him to say something friendly and encouraging about the progress of human affairs. If the French press is noxious, at any rate the English press is admirable, according to him and Sir Arthur.

Ellesmere. So somebody gets some credit, which must be very painful to you, Mauleverer.

Mauleverer. Allow me to change the subject a little, only a little, and to make a statement of facts as they exist at the present moment, in which doubtless these praisers of mankind, Sir Arthur and Milverton, will discern something that is very wonderful and very beautiful.

Ellesmere. Don't include me. I didn't say the English press was very astonishing or very beautiful.

Mauleverer. Please, Sir John, have the goodness, for one five minutes, to let me have my say without interruption.

There is a city, the second in the world as regards size, the first in the world as regards beauty: noble in Architecture (if there is such a thing as good Architecture in the world); rich in Art, as far as man's poor efforts in Art can go; abundant in works of Literature, whatever merit that abund-

ance may have: bright, clear, joyous; adorned with gardens, statues, fountains; the home of pleasure; the home of Milverton's beloved culture; distinguished for Science, as well as for Literature and Art,—not to have seen which is not to have seen anything of the world. And this great city is beleagured by a host of armed men; and, at this moment, we are dubious whether its temples, its towers, its palaces, its vast abodes of hoarded Literature and Art, its pleasant gardens, its light-reflecting lovely streets, may not be welded into one hideous mass of destruction by the shot and shell of the invaders. Here is your triumph of civilization: here is an example of the progress of human affairs: here is one of the conquests of Christianity! This is what it all comes to: and you can sit in your armchair, and praise mankind.

Ellesmere. (*Aside to me in a whisper:*) He is very awful when he breaks out in this way; isn't he, Sandy? These quiet fat men always are.

Mauleverer. (*Continuing.*) And things have been brought to this pass by two nations, highly civilized. Oh, yes! highly civilized! For the invaders have gone down into the depths of

things. They know exactly what are the bounds of human knowledge. They have gone deeper than Locke ever did. They have not only discovered that it is impossible for the same thing, at the same time, to be and not to be; but they know all about innate ideas, and thoroughly understand the doctrine of contradictory inconceivables.

Milverton. While you are about it, Mauleverer, you may as well say, for you will say truly, that there is no branch of human knowledge to which this laborious and truth-loving people have not added much. What then!

Mauleverer. And, looking on, being perfectly aware of the danger, there have been the other wise nations of Europe—this Europe, with its Reformation, and its Art of printing, and all the fine things it has done and suffered since St. Peter came, or did not come, to Rome—with all their knowledge, and all their wisdom, and yet not able to prevent this culminating horror.

Milverton. As to "horror," I agree with you; but you have put it upon totally wrong foundations. I don't care about Art, or Science, or Literature, when you are considering human suffering. The horror would be quite as great to

me, if the beleaguered city did not contain one work of Science, Literature, or Art. A human being—any human being—is a far more beautiful production than the finest work of Art.

Sir Arthur. No, no, Milverton, this is going a little too far. The human beings may be replaced, but the works of Art cannot.

Milverton (*rather excitedly*). I am astonished at you, Sir Arthur. Just think for one moment of an agonizing night of suffering passed by any one wounded man, left on the field of battle. I declare, I would purchase exemption from suffering for that one human being by the destruction of the finest work of Art in the world.

Ellesmere. Really, Milverton, there are too many of us upon the ground, at least of us men, for there cannot be too many women.

Milverton. How can you talk such cruel nonsense, Ellesmere! Go to your Shakespeare. Learn there what a human being is, or may be. "How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

Mauleverer. The fewer human beings, the

fewer miserable fools, hoping inane hopes, wishing impossible wishes, endeavouring inconsistent endeavours—always duped from their cradles to their graves—the serfs of passion, the slaves of circumstance, at best the tyrants of their fellowmen. I prefer a great work of Art.

Lady Ellesmere. Really, Leonard, even I think you make too much of human beings. There is a something in a divine work of Art which would compensate——

[I do not like to continue the account of this conversation, for Mr. Milverton, goaded on all sides, got into one of those tremendous passions in which he sometimes, but very rarely, indulges, and said the most violent things against all of us. At last he got up and went out of the room, feeling, I suppose, that as a host he had not maintained the reticence which a host should practise, having said the strongest things in the strongest language. Certainly he went out making a playful remark; but it was bitter and severe in its playfulness. He said, "I will not stay any more with you wretches. You only put me into a rage, which I know is very unbecoming. I will go and talk with old John the gardener; and I do declare I believe that, in that somewhat

sour, crabbed old man, vexed with rheumatism, but whose nature has not been lowered by an effeminate care for works of Art, I shall find nobler and juster notions than in all you demi-semi-cultivated people. You put me in mind of the patricians of Rome, who could jeer, and joke, and bet about the gladiatorial shows, unconscious of the infinite cruelty and hideous indifference to human suffering they were manifesting."

[There was an awkward silence for a minute or two after Mr. Milverton left the room. Mrs. Milverton also went away, evidently to soothe her husband. Sir John Ellesmere broke the silence.]

Ellesmere. Well, we have "been and gone and took and done it," as the vulgar say. He is a dangerous fellow to deal with, is Milverton. You never know when you are touching him to the quick. At last I did not dare to joke, or I might have asked him whether I was worth the "Venus de' Medici," and which of the two, for the world's good, he would rather save from destruction.

Sir Arthur. I am very sorry; but you know he does deceive us. In general he bears so

serenely with your sarcasms, Ellesmere, with my fastidiousness, Mauleverer's misanthropy, and our general impertinence and opposition, that one is not prepared for these outbursts.

Ellesmere. Oh, you wicked Sandy! *Et tu Brute!* You surely ought not to have told the truth—namely, that you thought the books in the Paris Library more valuable than some of the human beings. I am ashamed of you!

Mr. Johnson. He never was cross with me before.

Ellesmere (*imitating Milverton*). I am disappointed with you, Johnson. There is an absence of that generosity of sentiment which becomes the young. From these hardened men of the world, what can one expect but hardness? But I did think better things of you. That was what he said, was it not?

Now, I am the most unlucky of all of you; for I really agreed with him.

Cranmer. Oh, oh!

Ellesmere. Upon my word I did; and, if he would only have had patience, I should have come round to his side. I don't care much about works of Art. To tell the honest truth, I like dogs and horses better.

I will tell you what we will do. Milverton is always abjectly humble and civil after one of these outbursts. We will boldly renew the conversation at or after dinner.

Mauleverer. *After* dinner. There is a chance of our having black-game for dinner. Mrs. Milverton told me that some virtuous Scotch laird had sent them some black-game—the first of birds. If the discussion should wax warm again, it will spoil our dinner.

Ellesmere. This explains that whispering in corners, of Mauleverer and Mrs. Milverton, which I noticed this morning, and thought it boded ill for Milverton's domestic peace. If he were here, poor fellow, he would dilate upon it as an instance of the effect of culture. Mauleverer is the most knowing man in culinary science; and all the women fear him, and look up to him accordingly. When he is coming to dine with us, Lady Ellesmere is more fussy than if she were about to receive seven dukes with their respective duchesses. She even condescends to consult me about the soups. And, let me tell you, I have invented a soup for these great occasions, about the composition of which I will hold forth to you some day. But now we must think of making our

peace with Milverton. It shall be *after* dinner, as Mauleverer suggests, that we will resume our wicked talk. Our fearlessness in renewing the conversation will show Milverton that we have not been hurt by all he has said. I shall go over to his side; for I assure you I am of his way of thinking; and it will all end as happily as the third volume of a novel. Only you must not give way too much, or too soon, but must hold for a time to your wicked opinions touching the supremacy of Art, Science, and Literature, and the insignificance of human beings. Otherwise he will see through our device.

[What a kind-hearted fellow Sir John Ellesmere really is! He was quite unhappy, as I found afterwards in a walk I had with him, at Mr. Milverton's having been put out in this way. Sir John Ellesmere did contrive that the conversation on this topic should be resumed. It happened, just as he had prognosticated; and the conversation proceeded in the most playful way; Mr. Milverton, however, protesting that all of us, except his good friend Ellesmere, did not make enough account of human beings. He concluded, I remember, by a quotation from a Scotch song, which has these words in it,—"And sair

she lightlies me." "Ah!" he said, "you sairly lightly the ineffable worth, and the 'potentiality,' as Dr. Johnson would have said, of any human being, a creature not made of stone and paint, that is to live for ever and for ever."]

CHAPTER III.

[THE following chapter is very brief; but I think it furnishes more materials for thought than any one we have lately had; and, although it deals chiefly with war, and especially with the present war, it certainly furnishes an illustration of that subject, for which Mr. Milverton and I have, from the beginning of these conversations, in vain endeavoured to get an uninterrupted hearing—namely, general culture.

Nothing surprises me more—for I am, comparatively, an ignorant and ill-read young man—than to find how subjects connected with the events of the present day, may always meet with illustration and enlightenment from the labours of some of the great writers of the past.

However, I must not take up the time of my readers by lucubrations of my own, but must

proceed at once to set before them the result of my notes of this conversation, which began thus.—]

Milverton. There is a question, in reference to war, which I should greatly like to discuss with you. Without, however, wishing to say anything rude or impertinent, I hardly think that you will appreciate the full importance of this question. Some of you, for instance, Ellesmere, will only make fun of what I say; and I do not think that any of you, except perhaps Sir Arthur, will enter into the subject heartily. If a certain excellent Florentine gentleman, who was born about four hundred years ago, were alive and in this room, I cannot imagine a greater intellectual pleasure than discussing the question with him. He, too, would have delighted in such discourse; would soon have taken the main part of it out of my incapable hands, and would have woven it into one of his own discourses of transcendent sagacity.

Sir Arthur. I suppose that this "excellent Florentine gentleman" is no other than Niccolo Machiavelli.

Milverton. The same—the man who has,

perhaps, been more mis-represented than any other man that has ever lived.

Ellesmere. Doesn't he (I mean Milverton, not Machiavelli) love a paradox?

Mauleverer. I am with you, Milverton, before hearing what you have to say; for Machiavelli is a great friend of mine. I have not read much of him; but what I have read, convinces me that he had penetrated into, and thoroughly understood, the depths of human baseness.

Milverton. And the heights of human goodness.

Cranmer. I know nothing about Machiavelli; but I have always understood that he was most manifestly an emanation from the Evil-one; and, for my part, I have seldom found that the universal opinion of mankind is a wrong one. I have heard, but I dare say it is a mere popular theory, that our expression, "Old Nick," was derived from Niccolo Machiavelli.

Ellesmere. I propose something. Before entering upon the Machiavellian subject, which Milverton, with a sublime conceit, intimates that we are hardly worthy to discuss, let us hear something about Machiavelli himself from Milverton, his chief admirer and friend.

Milverton. I am quite willing to endeavour to make you appreciate, as far as you are capable of appreciating, the merits of this extraordinary man.

Now, when any one is very strongly convinced that he is right in any matter, even if he is not a sporting man, he is very prone to offer a bet upon the subject, as the most undoubted way of showing his sincerity. Now I will bet you, Ellesmere——

Ellesmere. What shall we bet? I vote it shall be a new collar for dear Fairy. Her present one is very shabby; and I know she feels ashamed of it.

Milverton. Good. I'll bet you, that if you will give me ten minutes time to look over my copy of Machiavelli, I will produce a number of passages from his writings which will compel you, if you are a just man, to admit that they have the most clear bearing upon the present state of the war between the French and the Germans, and that these passages are pregnant with wise suggestions to both sides.

Ellesmere. Done!

Milverton. And, mark you, I am not prepared for a bet. I had not been thinking of

Machiavelli till this conversation began, and I have not looked into his pages for two or three years. Give me the book, Johnson.

[Hereupon Mr. Milverton took his Machiavelli, and went out of the room. The conversation during his absence was of a desultory kind, being chiefly enlivened by Ellesmere's saying that, after all, he had a great sympathy with Machiavelli; as many other great and good persons had been grievously misunderstood and calumniated—for instance, he himself, (Sir John Ellesmere,) the Count von Bismarck, Nero, Henry VIII., and last, not least, Lucrezia Borgia. It must not be imagined that Nero, being mentioned immediately after Count von Bismarck, was intended for an uncomplimentary allusion, for Sir John Ellesmere has always maintained, and in this he has been supported by Mr. Milverton, that Nero has been greatly calumniated, and was, as he says, not a bad sort of fellow. Then Mr. Milverton entered the room.]

Milverton. I feel quite confident that I shall win. I will tell you what I propose to do. I will merely read the headings of some of the chapters. Then, if you wish it, I will give extracts from any chapter that may seem to you

to bear closely upon the subject of the controversy.

"*Se le fortezze, e molte altre cose che spesse volte i principi fanno, sono utili o dannose.*"

"Whether fortresses, and many other things which princes frequently make, are useful or hurtful."

"*I danari non sono il nervo della guerra, secondo che è la comune opinione.*"

"Riches are not the sinews of war, as according to the general opinion they are supposed to be."

"*Che gli uomini che nascono in una provincia, osservano per tutti i tempi quasi quella medesima natura.*"

"That the men who are born in the same province, preserve throughout all time nearly the same nature."

Hitherto the headings of the chapters have been somewhat general in their application. We are now coming to close quarters.

"*Come un capitano prudente debbe imporre ogni necessità di combattere ai suoi soldati, e a quelli degl' inimici torla.*"

"How a prudent general ought to impose every necessity for fighting upon his own soldiers,

and to take away necessity for fighting from the soldiers of the enemy."

Cranmer. Don't be angry with me for interrupting, Milverton; but I don't understand.

Milverton. Nor did I thoroughly until I glanced into the chapter, while I was in the other room. It means—Always have somewhat of the pressure of necessity, as an impulse to your troops when you make them fight, and as a reason for your doing so. And especially, do not give your enemy the advantage which arises from that ultimate form of necessity, despair.

Is not this good advice? If you could but see how he works it out, you would certainly say so. I feel though, I have not done justice to this chapter. Let me try again; he means, let there be a reason for your fighting—manifest to your own troops—a convincing reason of necessity why you should fight then and there. In short, always have necessity on your side. Observe how the contrary course of conduct has acted upon the French troops during the present war. There have been innumerable marchings and counter-marchings: no reason why the battle should have been here, and not there; now, and not then. That is what demoralizes troops, as

Machiavelli perceived. Observe how large his maxim is: what a number of cases it would comprehend. It is getting those emphatic words "you must" upon your side; and contriving that the enemy is not driven into a corner; but has every opportunity for vacillation; that there should be no "you must" for him to say to his troops.

Again, "*La cagione perchè i Francesi sono stati, e sono ancora giudicati nelle zuffe da principio più che uomini, e dipoi meno che femmine.*"

"The reason why the French have been, and are now, accounted in warlike contests, to be at first more than men, and afterwards less than women."

Sir Arthur. Pardon me, Milverton; but I do not think it very generous of you to quote this chapter. Are *you not*, too, inclined to lean to the strongest?

Milverton. No, my dear Sir Arthur, I am not. I never would have quoted the heading of this chapter, at least at the present time, unless I had found in the body of the chapter that Machiavelli had maintained of the French that, "with ordinary skill, the French ardour in war might be kept up to the end in the same measure as at the beginning."

"*Ma non è per questo che questa loro natura, che li fa feroci nel principio, non si potesse in modo con l' arte ordinare, che la li mantenesse feroci infino nel l' ultimo.*"

Now I come to the best of all, at least to the most applicable at the present moment.

"*Ai principi è alle repubbliche prudenti debbe bastare il vincere; perchè il più delle volte quando non basti, si perde.*"

"Prudent princes and commonwealths ought to be satisfied with victory; for most times when victory does not suffice, it is lost."

Sir Arthur. This is very good indeed. I can imagine, even from my little knowledge of Machiavelli, what an excellent chapter he would write on this heading.

Ellesmere. I don't rely upon imagination: let us hear some of it. The thing certainly promises well.

Milverton. It is indeed a wonderful chapter. He shows, by examples, how unwise it is for the victors to make too much of their victory; for the vanquished, to make too little of their defeat. I declare——

Ellesmere. Say "solemnly," after the fashion of Mauleverer.

Milverton. Well, then, I declare solemnly I believe that if Count von Bismarck and M. Jules Favre, who are probably rather busy men just at present, would, for only one day, forsake all other business, and shut themselves up to study this chapter of Machiavelli, it would be the best thing for the world that could happen.

Ellesmere. But give us some of the examples, Milverton.

Milverton. I will try to do so; but I feel keenly how poorly I render into English his consummate Italian. However, I will give it in the most literal manner I can. "Hannibal, after he had routed the Romans at Cannæ, commanded his orators at Carthage to announce the victory, and to ask for supplies. It was argued this way and that, in the Carthaginian Senate, as to what should be done. Hanno, an old and prudent citizen of Carthage, counselled that this victory should be used wisely; namely, to make peace with the Romans, it being possible for the Carthaginians to have peace now, as he said, with honourable conditions, as they had gained a battle; and that they should not wait to have to make peace after another battle, which might be a defeat. *For the object, he argued, of the Carthaginians should be to*

show the Romans that they were able to deal with them; and, having gained a victory, they should have a care not to lose the benefit of it, merely for the hope of gaining some greater battle."

Now, my good friends, just recollect what a victory Cannæ was! I think the foregoing passage might be of use to Count von Bismarck. Now, for M. Jules Favre.

Machiavelli takes the siege of Tyre as an instance of the folly of refusing terms of peace offered by the prevailing side—the inhabitants of that city having most unwisely refused the conditions of peace which Alexander the Great had offered to them. The following is the passage :—

"Therefore, princes cannot commit a greater error when they are attacked (and when the assault is made by assailants who are far more puissant than they are), than to refuse all terms of accommodation, especially when these terms are offered by the enemy; because never will such low terms be offered to them, which may not be in some respect advantageous for the party which accepts these terms, who will thus be sharers of the victory gained over themselves."

How profound those last words are! I have paraphrased rather than translated. He writes with such fearful brevity and compression, that one is sometimes obliged to do so. I will give the words to you in the original :—"*e vi sarà parte della sua vittoria.*" You see that the prince who is wise enough to accept the first terms offered to him, has, according to Machiavelli, a part in the victory gained over himself. Now I want to be allowed to give you another passage which seems to me singularly applicable to the present state of affairs. I am afraid you are getting tired of Machiavelli.

Sir Arthur. Not a bit. I could listen to these extracts and your comments on them for a very long time. They interest me exceedingly.

Ellesmere. I could not listen for a very long time, but I am quite willing to hear one or two more.

Milverton. I will not molest you with more than one; here it is.

"*Che lo assaltare una città disunita, per occuparla mediante la sua disunione, è partito contrario.*"

"That to besiege a disunited city, in order to

occupy it by means of its disunion, is an unwise course."

You will admit, I believe, that it is probable that not a little wisdom bearing upon the present siege of Paris may be extracted from this chapter. Machiavelli gives several examples to prove the truth of his assertion, and concludes by adducing the contests of Philip Visconti, Duke of Milan, with the Florentines, in which contests he always relied much upon their disunion. At last, grieving over these military undertakings of his, he exclaimed that the factions of Florence had made him expend uselessly "two millions of gold." I suppose he means two millions of ducats.

Ellesmere. Come here, Fairy. No: you needn't kiss me so much. I am not proud of being kissed, even by the most charming of dogs. She shall have a new collar, she shall; and without any expense to her master. I must own, Milverton, that this Machiavelli of yours appears to be a very fine fellow, and that his writings, as is the case with the writings of all the greatest men, have a perennial meaning and application. Now I have given up handsomely, have I not? Your success in this bet has made

me anxious to hear the question which you were about to put before us at the beginning of this conversation, but which you thought we were scarcely worthy to hear, and which you longed to discuss with your beloved Florentine.

Milverton. No; I decline to do so now. It has really been a great exertion to me, in this short time, to renew my acquaintance with Machiavelli; and to make up my mind, without a moment's hesitation in each particular case, as to what passages I should give you, to prove the point I desired to prove. I believe, if we looked into the causes of our fatigue on any given day, we should find that it depended more upon the number of decisions we had come to than upon all the rest of our work.

Ellesmere. Milverton cannot be tired, but he must fatigue himself still further by finding out good reasons why he should be tired. For my own part, I am always tired of severe discussion, and am ready for muscular exercise. I am a muscular Christian, if I am worthy of the name of Christian at all. How I wish we were at Eton again, Milverton! and could go leaping over Chalvey ditch with long poles, as we used to do when we had exerted our minds to the

utmost stretch by writing splendid copies of verses upon the theme—

> Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
> Dulce loquentem.

Men are such fools not to keep up their boyish sports. However, Fairy and I are just as lithe and lissom as we were when we were both young puppies—are we not, Fairy?

[So saying, Sir John leaped out of the study window, followed by Fairy, and neither of them was seen any more until dinner-time. And thus the conversation ended; for none of us ever attempt to keep up continued conversation when the provoking Ellesmere has left us, whom Mr. Mauleverer, delighting in culinary similes, always likens to first-rate Ceylon curry-powder, which, as he says, "can give significance and flavour even to the poorest and most contemptible of edible animals—the domestic rabbit."]

CHAPTER IV.*

[SUBSEQUENTLY to the conversation in the first chapter, grave events had occurred. The battle of Sedan had been fought; the French army had capitulated; Louis Napoleon had surrendered himself; and the Republic had been proclaimed at Paris.

It was when talking of the foregoing remarkable incidents that the following conversation arose.]

Milverton. There are two things in the world that infuriate me. One is, cruelty to animals; or, to extend the idea, cruelty to the unresisting, — the other is, the invasion of a legislative assembly by a mob. I have no patience with either of these enormities, and would do anything in the world to prevent them.

* It will be obvious to the reader that this conversation succeeded the one given in the first chapter; but I published the others out of their order, thinking that Machiavelli's wise sayings might possibly be of some use at the present moment.

Sir Arthur. At Paris it is the old, old story over again. A mob being where it should not be, has been the cause of most of the political misfortunes of France.

Ellesmere. Yes, I hate a mob. It is a creature that has no respect for lawyers.

Sir Arthur. Consider what a legislative assembly is! The very essence of its being—the reason of its existence—is, that there should be deliberation and resolve, freed from all influence of force. It is a supreme effort of mankind to deal with things reasonably.

Ellesmere. The rooks and crows understand this, and conduct their solemn assemblages without employing beak or claw.

Milverton. Sir Arthur has told us to consider what a legislative assembly is. I ask you to consider what a mob is; and, to tell the truth, I doubt whether any of you have thoroughly considered what a mob is. The main horror of it to me consists in its being a *chance* assemblage of persons who will never meet together again. I wish I could explain to you all that I see in this important fact. If the mob consisted of the same persons who should meet on various occasions, it might be trained and educated;—

might appreciate the consequences of its deeds;—might have remorse;—might undo what it has done. But, no: collected together in the most haphazard fashion, it enters sacred places where it should never be seen; changes, in a few moments of fury, the fate of nations; and then vanishes, as it were, into space, having generally accomplished an amount of evil which it takes a generation or two to reverse.

Ellesmere. Upon my word, that does put a new idea before one, though all that Milverton has said is as obvious as the light of day. But I *do* perceive that I have always viewed the mob as if there were unity in the creature; as if it were the same mob, here and there, yesterday and to-day, instead of its being a "fortuitous concurrence of accidental atoms" which are never again reunited, any more than are the constituent atoms of a cloud that has descended in rain. Now if the real mob were like the stage mob, which is what Milverton would desire,—that is, a number of persons who are sometimes a mob of fisherman, sometimes a mob of peasants, sometimes a mob of outlaws, sometimes a mob of ladies and gentlemen, but always one and the same mob,—they might be drilled and instructed,

might have a soul and a conscience, and might be a creature amenable to reason.

Sir Arthur. Familiarity renders us dull and unappreciative of the wonderful thing that the structure of civil society is; tens of thousands of people, as in our greatest towns, moving about in an orderly fashion, almost as orderly as bees; and certainly not more than one man in each ten thousand, throughout the day, endeavouring to carry his object, whatever it may be, by pure force.

Milverton. It is an immense result — the result of profound thought and continued labour of untold generations.

Sir Arthur. Yes: and when you have mob rule, you resolve, for the moment, all this splendid fabric of civilization into its original elements.

Ellesmere. King Mob is the most detestable power that has existed in the world, always excepting the Inquisition of former days. And, strange to say, there has been a singular similarity in the proceedings of both of these iniquitous powers, although they seem outwardly so much to differ.

Cranmer. Well, hitherto, I have agreed with every word that has been said about mobs; but

this last saying of Ellesmere's does astonish me. For the life of me, I cannot see what likeness there can be between a mob and the Inquisition.

Ellesmere. But there *is* a likeness. No great thinker, Master Cranmer, is understood at once. Kant is not; Hegel is not; and many a writer of the present day is somewhat obscure on the first reading. But I will expound. Did not the Inquisition act suddenly? Does not the mob act suddenly? When you were seized by the Inquisition, did you know who was your accuser, or of what you were accused? And when you are confronted by a mob, does not some obscure person, name unknown, and who probably knows nothing of you, shout out "*à la lanterne!*" and you are strung up immediately? There are certainly trifling differences, chiefly of mere forms and ceremonies, between the action of the mob and that of the Inquisition; but substantially their proceedings are of a very similar character. In both cases the charge against you is almost incomprehensible. I am sure you will see I have proved my point.

If it had not been for this fellow, Cranmer, who is so unlike me, always dissenting from what everybody says, our conversation would have

been a wonderful and beautiful instance of uniformity of thinking.

Milverton. I know that Ellesmere is secretly very tired of this uniformity; and, therefore, if you please, we will change the subject; and you will, perhaps, allow me to say something which I had intended to say about culture.

Sir Arthur. No, Milverton, our minds are, for the moment, wholly given to war. Say *now* anything that you have to say about that.

Milverton. There is no subject to which I have given so much thought in the course of my life as that of war, or rather the prevention of war. I have turned it over in my mind in every imaginable way; and, sometimes, the result of long thought about it has been only increased perplexity. It is not of much use talking about the horrors of war—at any rate, not at the time it breaks out, or after it has broken out. One goes on, though, talking about these horrors, just as one fires from a fort upon the outposts, not from any hope of seriously checking the enemy, but merely to show that one is on the alert, and thoroughly alive to the situation.

But what one wants to get at are the principles, the ideas, the *animus*, and the peculiar conditions

of circumstances, which one foresees must lead to war. Of course, if one could by any talking or writing affect the primary questions, such as those which relate to the principles upon which men act, one would do the greatest good. But this is an effort which requires long periods of time.

Ellesmere. Please give us an instance, Milverton. You know my horror of the abstract.

Milverton. The putting down of false ideas of glory would illustrate what I mean. This is clerical business; but, somehow or other, the clergy do not seem to do it.

Cranmer. I should like to have an account of the secondary causes,—those which relate to what Milverton somewhat vaguely calls the conditions of circumstances which cause war.

Milverton. If you will all be very good and attentive, and if Ellesmere will promise not to interrupt me for an interval of six consecutive minutes, I will endeavour to show you what I mean in this respect.

Ellesmere. Done! I believe Milverton would like to have me held with a cord round my tongue, as if I were a refractory horse about to be shod.

Milverton I will divide the subject carefully.

But first I must notice that all endeavours to prevent war, whether relating to primary or secondary causes, depend upon increased culture of the minds of men.

1. *This great argument must be insisted upon, namely, that the results of war are never, or at least, hardly ever, what the promoters of war intend or hope for.*

It assumes as a fact that which is well known to historians: I doubt, however, whether any historian has adequately exemplified it by the innumerable examples that might be given. And, comparatively speaking, it is of little use that historians alone should be cognizant of this fact. It should be well known to the million; and, among the million, to the many statesmen who often act as if they were entirely ignorant of the fact.

2. *It should be one of the great efforts of the world to settle, in times of peace, those unsettled questions of diplomacy which are nearly sure, at some time or other, to lead to war.*

I should not wonder if some future historian were to prove that the Schleswig-Holstein question was the cause of the whole of the present turmoil and misery.

It is a witty saying, attributed to Lord Palmerston, that there was only *one* man in Europe who understood the Schleswig-Holstein question; and that *he* did not understand it. Now, what is the use of diplomacy, if it cannot settle these questions?

3. *The craving for increased territory should be restrained.*

If there is any signal benefit for mankind which can be effected by increase of culture, it is this:—that the wild desire which exists in some nations for increase of territory, may be checked by the thinkers of the nation. Can it be said of any ruler, or set of rulers, in any country we know of, that they succeed in governing well the people of their own country? And why they should wish for any more people to govern, surpasses my comprehension.

At present, we are the only nation that has even a dim apprehension of the wisdom of this self-restraint.

4. *The ways of peace should be made interesting.*

This seems very vague; but I contend that the project has a great deal in it. One of the main reasons why we British people are averse

from war, is, that civil life is exceedingly interesting to us, and that all our people partake of it. For example, the man who is devoted to education, or to sanitary reform, or who is anxious to increase the political force of any particular class in the State, has enough upon his mind to occupy all his energies. War is a horrid nuisance to *him*, and a terrible interference with the mode of action he loves best.

5. *Reward and honour civilians.*

This again may seem to have but little to do with the main subject. It has, though. It would be a most prudent thing, with a view to checking warlike impulses, to give rewards and honours for the great actions in civil life. At present, I suppose you will all admit that rewards for civil service are very rare, and rarely made with judgment.

6. *In the affairs of other nations, intervene very early, or not at all.*

I suppose you will all agree to this. There is an immense deal to be done by early intervention; and, if you ever mean to take any part in what may seem to be an affair concerning other nations only, but which, in reality, is almost always your own affair as well as theirs—especially if

they are neighbouring nations—you must intervene early. At its outset, the greatest river can be easily bridged over; but never so easily afterwards.

Ellesmere. You have exceeded your six minutes, Milverton; but I myself held the rope round my tongue. I must now, however, speak out. One of your six maxims had reference to checking the wish for territory. Your statement of the case was not fair; at any rate, not altogether fair. The aggrandizing rulers of nations do not wish for territory because they want to have more people to govern, but because they wish to be able to govern in peace the people who are already under their sway. That would be *their* statement of the case; and you must meet it.

Milverton. I do meet it by all the other suggestions I have made. Besides, you know, if we are to go on for ever preparing warlike means in order to ensure the ends of peace, there is no prospect of improvement for the world in this matter. Whatever I, considering myself for the moment a warlike nation, say or do, I can always maintain that it is with the object of preventing war being made upon me.

Now I will tell you what is my ultimate

thought on the whole matter; and that is, that there will never be assured peace for the world, until two or three of the great nations resolve to take the risk of preparing for peace instead of for war.

Mauleverer. This is simply Utopian.

Sir Arthur. I cannot go so far as Milverton; but this I will say, I think that we, and other nations of Europe, have been very remiss in not laying hold of any opportunities for entertaining the proposition of something like general disarmament. I was almost alone in the political world, when I thought we ought to have welcomed the proposal of a congress, which was made by Louis Napoleon some time ago.

Milverton. I was with you, Sir Arthur.

Sir Arthur. It may seem very hopeless, but no opportunity of that kind should ever be lost. I cannot but think that some good must come eventually from any meeting of European statesmen who should meet together to consider these great questions of peace and war.

Milverton. Yes.

Cranmer. I say "yes" also.

Mauleverer. And I do not say no.

Milverton. Again, here is an amount of

unanimity which must be very trying to Ellesmere. I will, therefore, venture to introduce a topic respecting which I have no hope of there being, amongst us, any uniformity of thinking. Indeed, I know I shall be in a woeful minority. I really do not know that there is any human being who agrees with me in what I am going to state as my opinion.

Cranmer. Ellesmere will agree if he possibly can. It would be absolute joy to him, I know, to be in a minority of two against the rest of the eight hundred millions of the world.

Ellesmere. Thank you, thank you, Cranmer, for your favourable opinion of me. I believe, my good friend, you are a determined free-trader. Do you suppose that free trade was advocated at first by more than a minority of two? But proceed, Milverton; let us hear this wonderful heresy.

Milverton. I cannot admire the spirit of agglomeration which prevails among mankind at present.

Ellesmere. Somewhat vague, this!

Milverton. For instance, I do not see the advantage of great States; I do not see the advantage of collecting together all the people

that speak the same language, into one nationality. I do not believe this collectiveness tends to civilization, or to prevent war. It tends to uniformity; whereas I think civilization is promoted by diversity. I have not seen that the greatest things have been done by the largest States. In fact, I think there is a danger of bigness being supposed to be greatness.

Ellesmere. I have often heard you allude to such subjects; but I have never really thought about them myself. Having no opinion of my own, I am quite willing to be upon your side—for a consideration. Stop that breakfast-bell of yours; I hate the cross, clanging, peremptory noise of bells. Stop it, I say, for only three mornings, and I will fight your battle like a man and a brother.

Mauleverer. I will be on your side, too, Milverton; but, without demanding any fee. I have told you, until I am weary of mentioning the fact, that man is a wretched creature, placed amidst deplorable circumstances, and that you cannot make much of him whether he belongs to a small state or a big one, to a small town or a huge metropolis; but I should think there is more certainty of the fermentation of folly, the

more you agglomerate people, to use Milverton's word; and that foolish ideas are more likely to reach their consummation of folly in action, the larger the number of people who entertain these ideas.

Ellesmere. Having on our side Milverton, who is so eminently practical, and never led away by enthusiasm—Mauleverer, whose loving insight into human nature must make him take a wise view of all human affairs—and Ellesmere, that fair, impartial, and unprejudiced man, who is always willing to do the best he can for his fee—we must prevail. We three against the world in talk, I say. And so, come on.

Milverton. I think that my American friends are very wrong in the view they take of this matter: they have a juvenile love for territorial acquisition. Surely they are big enough to be content with what they have, and may now think about making themselves as pleasant as they are useful to the rest of the world.

I cannot see the force of the argument, that people who speak the same language, must necessarily be agglomerated together. I do not find in language such a bond as that. Surely there are peoples who differ intensely from one

another in all that concerns community of thought and action, who yet speak the same language.

Then, again, do you suppose that the largest States always make the wisest laws; and that extent of territory confers especial wisdom on the ruling persons therein?

Ellesmere. Just the contrary, I think. The larger the territory, the less time can be given for attention to any part of it. There is no time for judicious legislation. If we ever fall as a nation, it will be from too much pressure of business on our hands. We have so much to do with Ireland, with India, with our colonies, that it is hard work to find time for attending to those legislative measures which would greatly benefit our own people.

I think I have followed pretty well upon the side which I have taken up for hire.

Sir Arthur. Allow me to say a word. Both you and Milverton have chosen to omit one very important element of welfare to a large State :— namely, that there is a greater choice of fit persons to govern.

Ellesmere. Now, though there is something in this argument, can you really maintain, Sir Arthur, that, in any great State you know of, much

advantage is taken of this opportunity for large and varied selection?

Sir Arthur. Not all the advantage that might be taken; but *some* advantage certainly.

Ellesmere. In a State consisting of three or four millions of people—such, for instance, as Saxony—do you not suppose that there is a sufficient number of persons to be found, capable of filling well the highest offices of Government?

Sir Arthur. Yes; but assuredly there is not such a choice as in such a nation as ours.

Ellesmere. Well, let that be granted for a moment. Still, will not the ministry of the smaller power, having so much less to attend to, be able to conduct its affairs better than they are conducted in the larger State with the slightly superior ministry? However, this is a point which admits of diverse opinion; and I do not pretend that what I have said about it is conclusive.

Milverton. I insist upon this point:—namely, that variety in Government is a great advantage to the world. Now, put an extreme case. Imagine all Europe under the sway of one Government, I do not believe this would be otherwise than a great detriment to the progress of civilization.

Then, as regards another point; I admit that you have a larger choice of governing men in a great country; but practically the choice is more at haphazard; and less is known about the capacity of individuals than is known in a smaller State.

Again, I am persuaded that for the advancement of Literature and Science there is an advantage which belongs to smaller States. The current of thought does not set in one way when there are many States in the civilized world.

Sir Arthur. I don't believe that Government has much effect in any way upon the progress of Literature, Art, or Science.

Cranmer. There I differ from you, Sir Arthur.

Ellesmere. What, Cranmer on our side! I shall go over to the other.

Cranmer. I do think that Government can very much promote Science. It is very good of me to say this, and to confess to you that when I was Secretary of the Treasury there was nothing I detested more than to receive a deputation of scientific men, as I generally came over to their way of thinking, though I had to resist them stoutly.

Ellesmere. You will never be Secretary of

the Treasury again, if you allow this peccant disposition of yours be known to your chiefs.

Milverton. I began by telling you that I should be alone in this discussion. Ellesmere and Mauleverer have kindly arranged themselves on my side; but I am going to say something now which will disgust my allies. I hold that at some future time, perhaps not a very distant one, there will be a great change of thought in the world as regards this question, and that separation rather than agglomeration will be the aim of some future age.

Sir Arthur. Restore the Heptarchy!

Milverton. Not exactly that. At present the pendulum is going very far in one direction; it will, by-and-by, swing as far to the other. Communities will endeavour to separate a little. Can there be a more dangerous associate for a town than a fortress? Future towns will avoid placing themselves in juxtaposition to a fortress. I mean that remark chiefly to apply as a metaphor. For example, seats of Government will not always be placed in the metropolis. Therein the Americans have been much wiser than European nations. Decentralization will more and more prevail. It will be found out that monster

towns are very difficult to deal with, as regards some of the principal objects of civilized life. It will also be discovered, that the most refined pleasures need not be absent from towns that are comparatively small. Dramatic talent, and, indeed, artistic talent of all kinds, will find its account in comparative dispersion.

Lady Ellesmere. I do believe you are quite right, Leonard.

Ellesmere. Lady Ellesmere has visions of a state of things in some small happy town, where there will be only one lawyer, her husband; where Johnny and the little ones will be able to spatiate amidst green fields; where there will be a cheery little opera; and where there will be no large dinner-parties—a form of enjoyment in London which she does not relish as much as she ought.

Besides, she would be free from those magnificent beings with powdered heads and silk-clad legs, of whom, at present, she stands rather in awe. For my part, I rather like them. They are almost the only well-dressed people in the community. Besides, I have a strong belief in the faithfulness of servants. In two or three great breaks-up of families — which unpleasant

events, alas, have occurred but too frequently in late days!—I have found that all the servants, "Jeames" included, have behaved very well. I do not agree with the common remark that is made about there being no servants now like the servants of the olden times.

Milverton. I quite agree with you. You must not be so discursive, but must allow me to go on with my remarks upon decentralization and disagglomeration. You must own, that the tendency of modern times is towards, what is called, popular government. Now popular government, with all its merits, has one great demerit, that of being prone to act by fits and starts. It is apt to rush from wild expenditure to abject thrift—one extreme being just as bad as another. I am not very fond of these popular impulses being allowed to act over immense extents of territory. Such experiments may be tried on too large a scale to please me.

On the whole, and as a summing up of this subject, I dare to say, that if I were not an Englishman, I would as soon be a citizen of the republic of Andorra as of any community I know of.

Ellesmere. I have before heard you talk of

this Andorra, but I am sure I do not know where it is. One of the uses of wars is, that they teach us geography; but whether, as Dickens makes the schoolboy say of the alphabet, it is "worth while to go through so much to learn so little," is a question. But where is Andorra? I suppose some little republic in South America, known only to Milverton, or perhaps existing only in his imagination!

Milverton. It is situate between the northern limits of Catalonia and the French Department of the Ariège. No customs-duties are imposed—think of that, Cranmer! The young men live in the same house as the head of the family, nor are they allowed any authority, not even a vote, until they are married. The style of life is very patriarchal. The total area is about one hundred and ninety square miles. The inhabitants, numbering about eighteen thousand, rule themselves, electing a council of twenty-four, that is, four deputies from each of the six counties into which the State is divided.

Mauleverer. People, I have no doubt, are as miserable there as elsewhere. Let all the other circumstances of life be ever so comfortable, you have always this, that the wrong people mostly

fall in love with one another, and that is sure to produce misery enough.

Ellesmere. After this cheerful sentiment, I think it would be as well to take a walk on the Downs. The sparseness of population there will be a comfort to Milverton's mind. No foolish agglomerations there, except of silly, well-meaning sheep. No need for decentralization.

Milverton. Stop a minute. There is something to which I must call your attention. We were talking, the other day, about French writers. I must read you a "communication," as official persons would say, which George Sand has just made. [Here Mr. Milverton read George Sand's letter.] Now take only one sentence, forming a paragraph, according to the fashion by which French writers seek to intensify their writing.

"The God of Armies—his name is Country and Liberty!"

Now have we any reason to believe that there is an especial "God of Armies?" And conceive the absurdity of this god's name being "Country and Liberty." Why there is no creed of the lowest savages that would not give the god of battles, if they had invented such a being, a more appropriate name than "Country and Liberty."

But, of course, it is idle to attempt to reason about such absurdities.

This letter, however, affords a good example of what we were saying about the way which French writers have, of wandering into big-drum talk. It seems as though they had a number of big words, which they chuck about in a chance fashion, hoping that by accident some of these big words may fall into their right places, and make a fine sentence,—which hope is seldom realized.

And then, remember, that this sentence has not been written by an ordinary writer, but by one of the most consummate writers of our age. Her little rustic novels are simply perfection. Take *La Petite Fadette* for instance, a story of twins, the children of a peasant proprietor, and of Fadette, the child of a poor peasant woman. There are no sensational scenes, no incidents that are not of the most ordinary kind. There is no exaggeration throughout the book. The style is excellent ; the descriptions beautiful. In fact, there is nothing to blame, and everything to admire. Again, it is a universal story, a story which would suit all nations—in its way Shakespearian. And then consider that the same writer

can talk such nonsense about the "God of Armies." The moment these French writers write about anything that is abstract, they seem to think that there is no occasion for common sense to pervade their writings; whereas common sense enters into fairy stories, and into the highest flights of imagination. There is a great deal of common sense in the story of Prospero and Miranda.

Ellesmere. All very true; but let us come and wander into the districts of disagglomeration.

Milverton. No: you must stay a little longer. I have another precious extract to give you from another French author, which will also be a good illustration of what I have been saying. Victor Hugo has been making a general appeal to the Germans, in the course of which he says, "Paris is nothing but an immense hospitality."

Ellesmere. He might as well say "Paris is nothing but buttered muffins." The one statement would be quite as true as the other.

Cranmer. What odd ideas you have, Ellesmere.

Milverton. But his idea is not far wrong in this case. Now, hospitality is a thing totally disconnected with the paying of bills—that is,

on the part of the receiver of hospitality. And if anybody has made a visit to Paris, and has had no bills to pay, he is a highly privileged mortal. You might as well say Regent Street is an immense hospitality.

I, too, have an odd idea. I think if you were to take thirty or forty potent substantives, thirty or forty telling adjectives, and thirty or forty verbs, some of them common, and some forcible; and if you were to put these substantives adjectives and verbs, separately, into three hats, in folded pieces of paper, as though you were going to draw lots; and then take from each hat one of these folded papers, you would make as fine sentences to be arranged in short paragraphs, as these great writers indulge us with.

In fact, you would be talking high French, without knowing it. I will give you a notion of the kind of substantives we will put into the substantive hat:—France, glory, Paris, fraternity, the State, liberty, battles, equality, despotism, immensity——

Ellesmere. Bosh!

Milverton. No: that coarse word will not come in, Ellesmere. Let me continue the list. Republic, beauty, joy, vastness, creation, space,

peoples, profundity, intelligence, civilization, and so on.

Among the adjectives, we will take care to have the word "sinister"—a word, if you observe, the French delight in.

Some day or other we will have a game at this, for the fun of the thing.

Ellesmere. Don't suppose, Milverton, that your own class, the authors of England, are entirely guiltless as regards this tall kind of talking. It was only yesterday that I was reading one of your great reviews, and I came upon this sentence:—"The great man is he who never blunders." Now, is not that as absurd as anything you have quoted?

Milverton. No, it is not. You could not have furnished me with a better means of showing the difference between the writers of the two nations. I admit that the statement of the English author is ridiculous, entirely devoid of truth, as may be seen from a diligent reading of the lives of great men, from King David downwards. It would, perhaps, be more like the truth to say, "The great man is he who is sure to make the greatest of blunders." But now mark the difference between the English and the French author.

The Englishman, smitten for the moment with the desire to write something fine, has put forth an aphorism, with which we cannot agree. But we understand what he means; whereas, when authors tell us that Paris is nothing but an "immense hospitality," or that the "name of the God of Armies is Country and Liberty," they have gone into a region of thought, or rather of no thought, into which we cannot follow them. I am much obliged to you, Ellesmere, for your attack upon the poor Englishman, for it has been very useful to me in the way of illustration.

Ellesmere. May we go now?

Sir Arthur. No; not just yet. It is very hard upon you, Ellesmere, but I want you to stay for a minute or two, to hear what I have to say. And it is simply this, that one of the greatest proofs of deficiency of civilization, in an individual man or woman, or in a nation, is the readiness to believe a lie. Of course nobody would believe a lie if he knew it to be a lie; but there are nations, as well as individuals, who hasten to believe injurious accusations, which, upon the face of them, are, to say the least, enormously improbable. For instance, when a man is accused of being a traitor, whose alleged treason would be

highly injurious to himself, any reasonable people would pause before they gave credence to such an accusation. In short, there is no evidence more strong, or more conclusive, of the existence of a superior mind, than its power of waiting and considering before it resolves to believe any injurious accusation. Happily, there are a good many such minds. Otherwise we should all be victimized by lies in an age when there is so much writing and speaking, and such swift modes of communication as there are in our time.

Ellesmere. I am glad I stayed, for I take this maxim of Sir Arthur to be a panegyric on myself, as nobody can accuse me of a readiness to believe anything I may hear.

[And here the conversation ended.]

CHAPTER V.

[We were all lounging about in the study, which is the cosiest room in the house; and there was no conversation of a settled character, for Mr. Milverton was absent. He had gone to attend a meeting of school managers, and had not returned. The talk was desultory, and chiefly maintained, as usual, by Sir John Ellesmere.]

Ellesmere. What a fine thing is a country gentleman's life in England! I do believe it is the salvation of the country. There is nothing like it anywhere else, as far as my poor experience goes. Now, look at our good host. If ever there was a man, meant to be a solitary student, that is the man; and such an inactive fellow, too! He thinks he has done wonders if he has walked with us across the orchard; but, you see, he is obliged to attend to local affairs; and no doubt it does him a world of good.

Sir Arthur. It must be a very attractive life, for it is the ideal life of every Englishman.

Ellesmere. You should have seen Milverton during the year in which the volunteers were formed. He told you the other day how proud he was of being a volunteer. I was down here for three weeks at the height of the business. You know how devoted he is to whatever subject is uppermost in his mind; and we heard about nothing but military rules and regulations, and military uniforms and accoutrements. I assure you, that great imaginary battles, in which the volunteers took the principal part, were transacted in this study; and we did not then hear half as much about Machiavelli as about Lord Elcho.

Sir Arthur. As I have often said before, it is a great advantage, Milverton's having always some subject pressing on his mind, which absorbs his energies, and which he will insist upon everybody else considering.

Ellesmere. I rather think I baffle him sometimes.

Cranmer. I don't know: he always contrives somehow or other to work round to his subject.

Ellesmere. Yes : and you always aid him in doing so.

Lady Ellesmere. I can't help thinking what a queer country squire John would make! He often talks of retiring; but, I confess I dread the day when that retirement will commence. It is not, by any means, that I have too much of his company at present; but I know we shall lead a life of perfect solitude, for which neither of us is exactly fitted. He will lay down the law to the country justices; and he will say some of his odd sayings at country dinner-tables; and, after a few months, we shall be steadily cut by all the gentry. It will only be my unfortunate self, or some old retainer like the gardener here, who will have to endure him; and what a life we shall lead! And then, too, somebody will commit a trespass, and John will make such a dreadful fuss about it—not caring a straw about the trespass, but being delighted at having an opportunity of fussing about something. Please don't retire just yet, John : not until we are a rheumatic, wheezy, old couple, and, like Mr. and Mrs. Smallweed, can sit by the chimney-corner and throw pillows at one another.

Ellesmere. Women are never accurate. Mrs. Smallweed didn't throw pillows.

Mrs. Milverton. John would be very good to the poor.

Ellesmere. Thank you, Mrs. Milverton. I wish you could make your sister sometimes say something good of me. Oh, dear! what a foolish man I was when I was young. I might, perhaps, have won a wife who would occasionally have spoken well of me.

Lady Ellesmere. Not if Blanche had known you as well as I do.

Ellesmere. Now that Milverton is out of the room, I must tell you something that tickled my fancy greatly. You recollect his going out of the room the other day in such a rage, because all of you would make out that works of Art were of more account than human beings; and how he said that he was going to confabulate with old John, the gardener. Well, it is an ill tempest that does not blow somebody some good. You must know that old John had given warning. Milverton had said, in the innocence of his heart, "The celery is not so fine this year as it was last year." Whereupon old John, being in one of his crustiest moods, fired up at once, and said, that "he saw he didn't give satisfaction, and he'd go, *that* he would!" and accordingly

he gave warning on the spot. Milverton was not deeply affected, seeing it was about the two-and-twentieth time (as I can certify) that John has given warning. Well, when Milverton was so angry with us, he really did go to get some comfort from old John. I have wheedled out of Milverton what was the talk between master and man. Old John knows every turn in his master's countenance, and saw at once, I have no doubt, how vexed he was. So the old man looks up in his sly way, like an old raven, with that side-long look in which ravens indulge, and said, "They beant with you this morning, master?" "No, thank goodness!" said Milverton, somewhat savagely, as you may imagine. "Ah! he do talk, that lawyer, he do, a'most like the clatter of the mill down yonder." (You will observe how everybody here lays everything that goes wrong upon me—me, the most innocent of human beings! and in this case, the only innocent one.) But, I forgive old John, for he benignly added, "I likes un though; he ain't a bad sort, arter all." Now, really, it was very splendid of old John coming out as a peacemaker. Moreover, he resolved to make Milverton perfectly happy, by taking him into favour again. "I beant sure,"

he added, "but what I'll stay till arter Christmas. You'll never get any one but me who will put up with your ways, master. As for that there celery, it was as fine as ever growed." Milverton, of course, owned that he must be perfectly in the wrong about that unfortunate celery; and then they went pottering together about the garden, laying out their plans for years to come. So you see that it is an ill tempest, as I said before, that does not blow somebody some good; and, in this instance (a very rare one, by the way) it has blown some good to the tempest-causer himself, for Milverton is always delighted to be taken into favour again by old John.

Sir Arthur. Well, I do hope that we shall have no more talk respecting the relative value of works of Art and human lives; though, as I said just now, what makes our conversations here so interesting, is, that Milverton generally contrives to keep before us the thoughts that are, for the moment, prominent in his mind.

Ellesmere. I do not think, Sir Arthur, that you have quite hit off the reason why we cluster about Milverton, and go to him, since we cannot persuade him to come to us, he being as fond of home as his cat, Bijou.

Sir Arthur. What is it then, Ellesmere?

Ellesmere. It is that he thoroughly believes in himself—not in his physical or moral self, for he must know the many weaknesses in those quarters, but in his intellectual self—in the truth of his convictions. I have known him ever since he was so high, and I flatter myself I understand him. He forms his opinions silently, after much pondering; and, when he has once formed them, he has a supreme conviction of their absolute rightness. Now there is always something interesting in dealing with a man who has a profound belief in himself. You have something to battle against. I hate your fluffy, feather-bed kind of people, your walking haystacks newly made, upon whom you can always make an impression.

Many of his opinions are aged opinions; and, as we do with good wine, he values them the more, because they have been bottled up so long. You know, for instance, how strong are his opinions about the evils of competition. You can always draw him out upon that subject. Well, he communicated these same opinions to me when we were strolling about the playing-fields at Eton (of course *he* never played at

anything if he could help it); and he told me then that competition was "the consuming vice of a decaying period." He was, even as a boy, somewhat grandiloquent. It was about that time, too, he informed me that Bishop Berkeley was the greatest metaphysician that had ever lived, and that his ideal theory was quite right. He holds that same opinion still, as I found out the other day. Again, when we were both a little older, and were walking up and down the cloisters of Trinity, on a wet day, he desired me to believe that Machiavelli was one of the greatest thinkers on political subjects that had ever blessed the world with their thoughts; and that the said Machiavelli was a very creditable personage, whose chief aim it had been that the world should be well governed.

It amuses me, Milverton's pretending to take us into council, and reading to us anything that he has written, as if we could change his views. If any of you, even the judicious Cranmer, supposes that he has ever seriously affected any one of Milverton's cherished convictions, he is the victim of a fond imagination. Milverton watches what we say, and will sometimes condescend to vary the expression of his opinions

accordingly. But the substance is adamantine in his mind. In fact, he uses us somewhat as foolometers, though of course he would be too polite, even in his thoughts, to use such a dislogistic word as "foolometers." But here he comes. [*Enter* MILVERTON.

Milverton. What were you saying about foolometers, Ellesmere? You shouldn't talk so loud, when the study window is open, if you do not wish to be overheard. I believe I am a foolometer to you, for you try all manner of folly and wickedness upon me. I don't forget, Master Ellesmere, that you pretended, the other day, to agree with these people about works of Art being more precious than human beings, though I must do you the justice to say that when, after dinner, the conversation became serious, you were thoroughly on the right side. But you thought you would annoy me, and "get a rise out of me," to use that common expression for a vulgar project.

Ellesmere. No; I was not exactly maintaining that you ever played the part of foolometer. What I was saying applied to other people—to Cranmer, and Lady Ellesmere, for instance. But what has been done, Milverton, by the rustic

sages, who constitute the school board? I do hope that you have been doing what you can to prevent this rabid culture of yours extending to national schoolchildren. They know twice too much already. At least they know far more than I do of those detestable vulgar fractions, and dates, and names, and everything which wise men forget, as soon as they can, after leaving school. I would have you to know, though, that I am becoming a highly cultured man myself, and am going to impart to you something that will delight the inmost cockles of your heart.

Now, what shall be said in praise of the man, or rather what shall not be said in praise of the man (for it would be difficult to praise him enough), who loses no time in practising what other people only preach? The words of the wise are to him "as the nails fastened by the masters of assemblies"—a passage in the Scriptures, by the way, which I have never been able to understand.

Cranmer. I know this, that Sir John is the master of surprises; for I should never have suspected him of rushing to practise what other people have preached to him. I dare say, though, he attends to his own sermons. Most people do.

Ellesmere. What an effect good company produces upon a man! Living with us so much as he does, Cranmer absolutely becomes witty. Don't let it be known, Cranmer. Keep your wit for us. It won't do you any good as a candidate for office.

Sir Arthur. Please leave Cranmer alone, Ellesmere, and tell us at once what you have to say. I am pining to hear what Milverton was about to say in reference to Machiavelli when you interrupted him the other day.

Ellesmere. I have been studying science ever since the first day of our recent conversations, when Milverton told us that it was a barbarous thing for men, who call themselves cultivated, not to know something of the physical world that surrounds them; and I have come to the conclusion that we are ruled by the infinitely little.

Mauleverer. Do you mean that we are governed in Literature and politics by people of very small minds? for if so, although it is a very ill-natured saying, I am not disposed to differ from you.

Ellesmere. How he endeavours to father his misanthropic ill-nature on me! No, sir; I mean

my maxim to relate purely to Science. I have been studying Professor Tyndall "On Dust:" then, prowling about amongst Milverton's books, I have been reading of monads, and rotifers, and animalculæ of all kinds. Then I have gone into geology, and found out how many millions of little shelly creatures are condensed into a square inch of marble. Then I have advanced into physiology, and learnt all about germ cells, and that "the microcosms of all the inhabitants of Ireland and Scotland would weigh little more than a pound."*

Lady Ellesmere. It is all true. I do not mean all true about those monads and things. But John has really been studying Science. He has been sitting up half the night, almost every night we have been here, and has sometimes had the cruelty to awake me to tell me of something wonderful he has found out.

Ellesmere. Yes. You see, I wanted to know some of the things you scientific people had really found out. It is hopeless, at my time of life, for me to go into $x + y = cos\ \theta$, the sort of stuff you mathematicians fill up pages with,—chiefly for fun, I believe, and to perplex and annoy us

* *God in Matter*, Dr. Clarke.

unscientific people. But I wanted to know results. By the way, I must not omit to tell you that I went into the question of infinitely small or invisible fungoid growths, which I daresay are the origin of most diseases, and that I revelled in the question of ultimate atoms.

Altogether, and most seriously speaking, I am appalled by a sense of the importance of observing infinitely small things.

Milverton. It is delightful to hear you talk in this way.

Ellesmere. Yes. As I approach old age I am becoming a Milvertonian, much against the grain. But it is wonderful, is it not, to see how large a part these immeasurably small, and, for the most part, invisible creatures and atoms, play in this world? I declare I should like to know something more of Science. I wish I had been a doctor instead of a lawyer. Those fellows keep up their Science. Look at Sir Henry Holland! If I had life to come over again, I would know more about these things.

I even carried off, on the sly, Milverton's microscope. What a world of beauty it reveals to us! But I see it is too late for me to hope to become a good microscopic observer.

Really, I perceive Milverton was right the other day, when he intimated what a loss might occur if a youth who was intended by nature to become a scientific man—perhaps a microscopic observer, were carried off to be manufactured into a mere soldier. Descartes, though, was a soldier, was he not?

Sir Arthur. Yes.

Milverton. Never mind the exceptions. Go on, Ellesmere.

Ellesmere. And let me tell you one thing. I would not do what Mauleverer has done, namely, bother myself about those huge remote heavenly bodies; but I would devote my mind to the little things which are more within my ken. And I will tell you another conclusion I have come to. I would not go so deeply into pure mathematics as they do at the Universities.

Milverton. This kind of knowledge must be kept up, too, Ellesmere.

Ellesmere. Well, it should not be kept up by me. Now I am going to betray something to you, meaning, I confess, to surprise you. I did not consult any of you upon my difficulties, or ask you to explain anything in these books, which required more mathematical knowledge than I

possessed (it is difficult to possess less); but I went off to a certain friend of mine, a clergyman, whose rectory is about six miles from here, and who was a high wrangler in my time. He knew all about $x + y = cos\ \theta$; but he had no interest whatever in the subjects I was studying. He neither knew nor cared anything about them. Before I could get any reasonable discourse out of him, I was obliged to indoctrinate him as to the principal facts. Now this should not be; and the worst of it is, that it makes good Milverton's theories about competitive examination. My friend said to me, that he had read "like a tiger" at the University. That was his expression, though I have not found the feline tribe to be very studious. They seem to be given chiefly to sleeping, if I can judge from your beloved cat, Bijou. But, however, he read "like a tiger," he said, to get his fellowship, and so to get his living. And, as for Science, he "did not care a straw about it." He wanted me, very much, to give him, in exchange for his small modicum of mathematical information, a legal opinion upon the "Common Rights" appertaining to his glebe.

To come back again to what were my thoughts after mastering this immense mass of knowledge

respecting the infinitely small portions of creation; —I really think I should have been a good reasoner on scientific matters, as I am very slow to believe anything.

Milverton. I do hope, Ellesmere, that amidst the many scientific works you seem to have studied——

Cranmer. Dipped into——

Ellesmere. It is a pity that Cranmer's nature is so prone to depreciation.

Milverton. Well; I hope then you did not omit to dip into Huxley's *Address to the British Association.* It is really excellent. You would immensely delight in it, Ellesmere, because it is so fair and so argumentative a production. And then the man is very eloquent, and writes well—a merit not always to be observed in the works of scientific men. Then, too, he comes to much the same conclusion that you do, Ellesmere, about the value of the infinitely small. Please give me the *Address*, Johnson. It is on the table close to you. I am afraid Ellesmere has not read it, as it does not appear to have been moved. Let me read to you one or two passages as illustrations of the style. It is not a work from which we can quote bits, in order to give a just idea of

the substance. In concluding, he says, "Our survey has not taken us into very attractive regions; it has lain, chiefly, in a land flowing with the abominable, and peopled with mere grubs and mouldiness. Nevertheless," he adds, "you will have observed, that before we had travelled very far upon our road, there appeared, on the right hand and on the left, fields laden with a harvest of golden grain, immediately convertible into those things which the most sordidly practical of men will admit to have value, namely, money and life."

Ellesmere. Huxley and I agree. We are birds of the same feather, only his scientific plumage happens to be a little more brilliant than mine. I would plead a cause for that man without taking a fee. Can I say more to show my appreciation of his merits?

But, reverting to the main subject, I do admit that there is an immense deal which we unscientific people might learn of Science, if we only aimed at mastering the results of scientific research.

Milverton. Now, this was where Lord Palmerston was so great. There was no discovery in Science during his time, which that much-inquiring man did not read about, and, as

far as he could, master. I dare say I have told some of you this before.

Sir Arthur. You have not told me. I knew Palmerston pretty well; but I had no idea that he cared about Science.

Milverton. He did, though. I have often made long railway journeys with him—we two alone in a compartment. For about the first fifty miles he would work at his official boxes. Then—for he was the most courteous and kind of men—he would have a little talk with me about affairs in general, thinking it right to be companionable. And then, out of his capacious great-coat pockets, he would bring some scientific paper—the last thing published by the Astronomical Society, or the latest discovery in optics; and he would be absorbed in this paper until the end of the journey. The only things that occasionally took the place of his scientific studies, were works relating to the grammar of foreign languages. He knew more about Italian and modern Greek than almost any other man. Now, I have always put him down in my mind as a man of real culture. Of course it would have been a grand thing for him if he had been better educated, scientifically speaking, and had known more of

pure mathematics; but then, I suppose, we should have lost him as a politician, for the bent of his mind was scientific.

Sir Arthur. You do surprise me, Milverton. How true that line of Henry Taylor's is—which, by the way, the same Henry Taylor (I beg his pardon, Sir Henry) once told me he had written without any notion that people would find so much meaning in it—"The world knows nothing of its greatest men."

Milverton. Yes; I think it ought to make us all very modest and dubious in our judgments of other men, when we see that a man like Lord Palmerston, living in the front of the world, always on the stage, one of the frankest of men too, was so little understood.

But I must not go on talking about Lord Palmerston, or I should talk for an hour. By the way, one thing more I must tell you, and that is, that he was a most sensitive man.

Ellesmere. Sensitive!

Milverton. Yes; about other people's difficulties and misfortunes. In his latter days one was obliged to conceal from him, occasionally, things of this kind; he fretted over them so much. And yet I daresay you have a notion that he

was a mere man of the world; jovial and good-natured, not taking things much to heart. You never were more mistaken.

It is particularly fitting that Lord Palmerston's name should be mentioned in connection with the subject which Ellesmere has brought so prominently before us; for his lordship, shortly before his death, wrote to me, desiring me to cause scientific inquiries to be made respecting a matter deeply concerning the public welfare, which inquiries chiefly related to the possible presence of small animalculæ, or fungoid spores. He had not been put up to this by any scientific man, but it was his own idea that an investigation of this kind might lead to important practical results.

Ellesmere. I wish I had given the attention to these things that Lord Palmerston did. Upon my word, if he, in his busy life, could keep an eye on the results of Science, surely the rest of us could do the same.

Milverton. Now, is not this a triumph for me, that I should ever have induced Ellesmere to take to Science!

Sir Arthur. It is a very delightful circumstance; but at the present moment, though

rejoicing in any improvement of our friend Ellesmere, I confess I am impatient to hear what Milverton was about to say anent the prevention of war—that something which we were scarcely worthy to hear.

Ellesmere. "Oh loss of one in heaven to judge of wise," as the Archangel Gabriel says in *Paradise Lost.* "Wise" there means wisdom.

Milverton. No; we will touch upon the Machiavellian subject afterwards: but do let me take this opportunity of proceeding with my main subject,—culture. If you will allow me to do so, I assure you I will enter upon a branch of that subject which will be of eminent service to you—practical service. Johnson wants me to make use of my notes on books; but I might as well ask this east wind, which half kills me, to be courteous and kind, as ask you to put aside talking about war at this time for the sake of mere literary discussion; but I think you will allow me to do so for the sake of "improving" the fact of Ellesmere's scientific conversion.

Ellesmere. You need not sneer. I shall be a scientific man long before you are a musician—a feat which you are always declaring you will undertake.

Milverton. I assure you, I really am glad that you have made a beginning in your scientific studies, and a very good beginning too. I do not say that you will be of as much use as my good friend Ruskin would be, if he were here; but your recent scientific acquirements will enable you to be of some use in supporting the views I am going to put forward.

I want to insist upon the deficiency of culture in the construction of those things upon which health and comfort in domestic life depend. I must, of necessity, go over much ground that has been trodden by me before; but what there will be new in it, will be, the endeavour to show that it is the want of culture which allows the existence of the evils I shall enumerate. You must admit, I think, if you are at all observant, that our streets, our houses, our furniture, our modes of conveyance, and, in short, all those constructions which we form for the uses of daily life, are full of errors. Now, in the first place, it will be natural for you to say to me, "we do admit this: we admit, for instance, that our streets are ill-devised, our houses ill-built, our apparatus for warming and lighting most wasteful and absurd, and our furniture mischievously ugly;

but we are neither architects, builders, tradesmen, nor artisans, and the blame must rest with them." I cannot agree with you. It is the want of general culture in the customer that creates the inferiority of the thing purchased by him.

Cranmer. As usual, I am the slow person who does not exactly understand the drift of your discourse.

Ellesmere. If you want to be understood, Milverton, always take a particular case.

Milverton. I will now do so; and I will profit at once by your scientific researches. Thanks to Tyndall and Huxley, and others of the chief men of Science in our time, you have discovered—for you a somewhat late discovery—the enormous influence of the small creatures and things in this world. You have learned to respect, with all the respect that flows from terror, the awful power of dust and invisible animalculæ. Now, what is the first thing to be done in a sick-room? The first thing is to remove out of it everything that could be a *nidus* of infection; but if you observe carefully the construction of nearly all furniture, and especially of the ornamentation of furniture, it is such as to make the furniture a *habitat* for dust. I some-

times wonder to myself, how infectious disease, when it has once got into a house, is ever to be got out, as there are so many little receptacles cleverly formed for holding it. Now, here comes in the main point I wish to prove, which is this—that if many more people had much more knowledge of the physical circumstances and laws of the world in which they live, these foolish forms of construction, of which I complain, would be put down. In the absence of this kind of culture, the most obvious facts pass unheeded. For example, it is a fact, patent to all men's eyes, that in a coal-burning country, there is a great deal of concentrated smoke in great cities. Does a perception of this fact make us a bit wiser in the construction of houses and public buildings in those cities? Look at a certain great public building which has been recently constructed. Observe the patty-pans, as I call them, which surround that building, and are fondly supposed to be an ornament to it, but which are rapidly becoming black dabs upon it. Observe, too, the grimy statues. If you must have such ornaments and such statues, they should be of terra-cotta—they should be washable.

Ellesmere. There spoke the man of know-

ledge, as he believes himself to be, in the ceramic art.

Milverton. I knew I should hear that ill-natured remark from Ellesmere; but I had expressed the same opinion long ago, before I knew anything about plastic clays. Passing from all personalities, let me insist once more upon showing you that these vast errors in domestic comfort result from want of culture. Now, I assure you I am going to the root of the matter. There is a certain time that elapses between the period when knowledge is ascertained about any subject, and the period when that knowledge is brought into practical operation. Of course that time is longer or shorter, according to the number of persons in a community who are imbued with the knowledge in question. For example, Ellesmere has honoured us with his company for about a fortnight. During that time, and when he has not been occupied in eating, drinking, walking, or in snubbing me, he has been picking up a little Science, chiefly giving his mind to very small creatures and things. I admit that, with his lawyer-like power of getting up a subject, he has probably acquired more in this fortnight than most people would have acquired in six weeks.

But I venture to tell you that if there were only a few thousands of persons who knew what Ellesmere now knows about these matters, there would be a public to which scientific men could appeal, and that public would very soon begin to make alteration in the direction which I have pointed out. After all, the constructor and the seller ultimately adapt their works and their goods to the wishes of the purchaser.

Ellesmere. See what a useful unit I am, or may become! I am sorry to say, however, that my vast scientific researches have led me to an equal fear and admiration of great things as well as small. In fact, I now believe in nothing but the biggest of big guns and the smallest of small animalculæ. I see that that nation will prevail in war which has guns of the longest range, and that that people will excel in health and comfort which has the greatest knowledge of dust and animalculæ.

Milverton. Now you must let me go on and express to you thoroughly my whole thoughts in this matter. The early training of the young must be greatly altered. I shall never forget a certain great author stopping me once in Belgrave Square, and, to the astonishment of the passers-

by, scolding me for wishing to inflict upon him knowledge about the Dolopēs. "Sir," he said, "I do not desire to hear anything about the Dolopēs. No, sir, I entirely decline to have any acquaintance with the Dolopēs." Had he been a man given to swearing, he would then and there have dealt very shortly and sharply with the Dolopēs. Mark you, I was not Dolopizing to him; but he was addressing me as an imaginary historical culprit, endeavouring to impress upon him some knowledge of an obscure Greek tribe. Now, I quite agree with him. I, too, decline to hear anything more about the Dolopēs, while there are such important things in this world to be attended to in preference to the Dolopēs. Oh that men would sometimes consider the shortness of life!

Again, I go back to early training. Surely the first thing, after moral training, that we should insist upon, is, a training that would make every child understand something of the world in which he is to live and take an active part. Now I must tell you a story that I have often told before; but it affords an excellent illustration of the absolute madness which sometimes prevails in our training of the young. I was asked to

examine a large school of girls, to ascertain their proficiency in education. I tried them in various things; and, as you may imagine, I am a very mild examiner, not being prone to expect much accurate knowledge from anybody about anything. I found them lamentably deficient. Somebody by my side, who knew the locality, whispered in my ear, "Try them in Ezekiel." That was more easily said than done, for I must confess that a knowledge of Ezekiel is not one of my strong points; but it did turn out that they were well up in their Ezekiel, at least in the guesses as to the meaning of that prophet's obscure writings, though they were ignorant of anything that could be of any practical service to them in after-life.

Sir Arthur. I quite agree with you, Milverton; and I do not think that what I am going to say contains any exaggeration. I maintain that about three-fifths of all we teach had better not be taught at all.

Milverton. I daresay. I should like to say something more to you upon this subject, to give another illustration of what I mean. Now I look upon the adulteration of what we eat and drink as one of the greatest evils in the world. I know that you are all with me on this subject, because

you were so when we talked of it once before. I declare to you that horror-stricken as I am at war, I believe it would be worth while to endure a great war, if by that means we could get rid of the adulteration of food and drink. You, even you, who are supposed to be tolerably cultured men, have no idea of the pernicious effect upon the moral and physical well-being of your fellow-creatures, produced by this adulteration.

Now, do you suppose that this practice of adulterating the prime articles of food, would hold its ground if there were more general culture? Not for a day. The present Parliament contains many men of scientific knowledge; but even if we were to have a *parliamentum indoctum*, a very ignorant body of men for legislators—that is, as far as Science is concerned—and even if culture did not reach them, a larger extent of knowledge amongst their constituents would compel legislators to think of, and to legislate upon, this great matter. Do you see those white chimneys in the distance? They are the chimneys of our doctor's house. He keeps all the milk-sellers for miles round in due order by means of his lactometer. I do not, however, expect that this general culture which

I advocate, will make everybody severely scientific—

Ellesmere. And lactometrious—

Milverton. But it will make them understand the mischief of adulterated food and drink. The demand will become wise. People will not expect to buy some article of food as genuine, at a price at which it cannot be genuinely supplied. And with a wise demand will come an honest supply.

I will say no more upon this subject. I confess it is one that I am liable to expatiate upon too largely. I know that I am often ridiculed for dwelling so much upon what people are apt to call "trifling matters."

Ellesmere. Yes; you might have some name in Literature if you Dolopized more, and wrote big and fine words about remote, obscure, and useless things; and, by the way, nobody would Dolopize better if he once took to Dolopizing. How grandiloquent Milverton would be on some obscure point in history or metaphysics; and how he would persuade himself, and endeavour to persuade his readers, that this obscure point he was labouring at, was "the be-all and the end-all" of human thought and endeavour!

Mauleverer. You have no notion how curry-powder and mustard are adulterated; and I could even tell you something about eggs which would astonish you.

Ellesmere. Well, I see we are to have no talk about the war this afternoon; and so, notwithstanding the east wind, let us go out. I find there is so much to observe in every little creature and thing, that I long to see for myself their ways of going on. I am now enamoured of tadpoles. I find they can teach me so much. By the way, this lady has been very silent during the conversation, which, as it treated largely, though indirectly, of bread and butter and comestibles of all kinds, I should have thought would have elicited words of domestic wisdom from her and Mrs. Milverton.

Lady Ellesmere. I have the grace, John, not to interrupt a conversation, when I can add nothing to it.

Ellesmere. Come along, all of you, and, as we walk, I will tell you about certain mischievous small creatures that can sting very severely, notwithstanding their smallness. I suppose we must leave Milverton behind, as all his culture has not enabled him to bear up against the east wind.

Some day I will give you a lecture upon the athletic side of things.

> A kick, that scarce would move a horse,
> May kill a sound divine,

as Cowper says; and the misnamed curry-powder and mustard which have some effect, I dare say, upon the highly-cultured Milverton, are swallowed with impunity by the robust and ignorant Ellesmere—no, by the way, not so ignorant, now that he has had his fortnight's severe training in the realms of infinitesimal science.

[We all went out for a walk, except Mr. Milverton; and I wish my readers could have heard all the droll absurdities that Sir John Ellesmere uttered during the walk, finding out resemblances between the habits of those animalculæ which he had studied, and the ways of his particular friends. Inanimate dust, as might be expected, he chiefly compared to useless learning.]

CHAPTER VI.

[I WAS much pleased with the last conversation, because, with the exception of some few vagaries, it kept to one subject—namely, the scientific culture which causes men to investigate infinitesimally small things and creatures. For the same reason I like the conversation which I am about to record; because, except a little careering about of Sir John Ellesmere at the outset, it keeps to one subject. I daresay that to my readers it is sometimes amusing to see how Sir John Ellesmere and Mr. Mauleverer divert us from the main subject; but it is not always equally amusing to Mr. Milverton and his private secretary. We want to say our say, and we can hardly ever manage to get it said. We often have members of Parliament visiting us here. They would thoroughly sympathise with our difficulties. Sometimes, as they tell me, they are full-charged

with a speech which they want to have an opportunity of delivering in some great debate. When, however, they think they have a chance of doing so, up rises a minister, or some leader of a section, or some favourite of the House, or some wit, such as Mr. Bernal Osborne; and at last it comes to this, that the speech, which has been so anxiously prepared, is not delivered at all.

It was a charmingly wet day, one of those hopelessly wet days in which one willingly resigns oneself to in-door work. We were in the study, as usual, and Sir Arthur had been urging Mr. Milverton to take this opportunity of discussing his Machiavellian branch of the subject of war, which he had threatened so many times to give us. Of course Sir John Ellesmere could not at once allow anything so sensible to be done, but interrupted as follows.—]

Ellesmere (*in a whining tone*). My beloved friends, my good brethren and sisters, I wish to address a few words of exhortation to you. Let the giddy and the frivolous depart from amongst us. Brother Cranmer, you had better go away. And if there are any young women present, who are more disposed to giggle than to listen reverently to the words of wisdom, they, too, had

better take their departure and employ themselves in knitting, netting, or knotting, so that they may compose their minds, and not disturb us by their presence. I am not unmindful, too, of what Brother Humgudgeon said lately on a similar occasion: that young women, while they knit, or net, or knot, should, at the same time, cease to employ their minds in preparing snares for those who are unyoked, and scourges for those who are, alas! yoked.

Cranmer. I am quite ready to consider myself as one of "the giddy and the frivolous;" but I don't see why I should leave the room.

Ellesmere (*in his natural tone of voice*). Don't you see that Milverton and Sandy mean business to-day? Milverton is like an old colonel, replete with self-importance, who has smelt a great deal of powder, and who thinks military discipline the finest thing in the world; and, as for Sandy, he is just like a young recruit, with streaming ribands to his cap, strutting up and down King Street, and whose whole bearing seems to say, "Come on, Rooshians or Prooshians: I've been and listed, and I'm a match for any dozen of you;"—(and so he need be, considering the difference in the numbers of the respective armies!) Depend

upon it, to-day it is as much as our places are worth to interrupt Milverton or Sandy in the discourse they are about to deliver to us.

Nevertheless, as I shall have no chance of interrupting, I must tell you a good story, which has just reached me in a letter from my friend Serjeant ——. Now I will tell you what I consider the merit of a good story, or a good anecdote. It is, that it should have a before and an after—that it should open to you vistas of thought. Milverton's story of the Frenchman and the map was, I must own, one of that kind. Mine, about Master Henry Spoffell's saying, had the same merit. When you tell me some witty thing that Talleyrand said, it is generally only a thing of the day, and you soon forget it. The story that I am going to tell you has a perennial application. Here it is. A very eminent person in the scientific world, one of the most renowned of engineers, began life, very wisely, by working in a factory. Now there was a man in that factory who had worked there for many years; who had never made any friends, never cottoned in with anybody, and was supremely silent: but he took to this young man; and his way of showing that he had taken to him, was, by coming up and saying to

him these four or five emphatic words, "A sanguineous rum world, this." — I use the word "sanguineous" because I remember that Milverton has a peculiar horror of the forcible Anglo-Saxon word it represents.—A day or two would elapse; and then the silent man would come up to his young friend again, and exclaim, "A sanguineous rum world, this." Now, you know, upon whatever subject Milverton is about to discourse to us, this saying of the silent man will be sure to apply. I say ditto to the silent man.

Mauleverer. And I say ditto, too. Ellesmere told you some time ago how he, and Bismarck, and Nero, and Lucrezia Borgia, were misunderstood. I also am misunderstood. Do you think that mine is a mere puerile misanthropy? I feel for the evils of the world as much as you do, only I cannot sit in the seat of the praisers of the world. It seems to me that almost everything concerning human society requires to be reconsidered.

Milverton. Well, my dear Mauleverer, I am going to invite you to a careful reconsideration of a very important branch of our subject, namely, the prevention of war.

War is useful to many; so says Lucan, *multis utile bellum.* Now; with a view to prevent war, we should look carefully into the question, as to the classes to whom war is useful; and, as I am sure Machiavelli would tell us, we should take care to encourage, or at any rate to give power to, those classes to whom war is injurious or odious. To begin with, I suppose you will admit that war is useful to soldiers and sailors, or at least is by them supposed to be so. Also, that it is useful to those who furnish the munitions of war. Also, that the agricultural community sometimes find it useful to them, or fancy that they do so. Here, however, I must guard myself from too wide an interpretation being given to those words, "agricultural community." I would rather confine this assertion to those who profit by the sale of agricultural produce. I do not believe that the agricultural labourer, as a rule, and with any view to his own interest, desires war. For example, I believe that if, at the present moment, the agricultural population of France were polled, in order to ascertain their wishes and opinions as to the continuance of the war, a very large majority would be found to vote for peace on almost any terms. What I have said above,

applies to peasant proprietors, as well as to agricultural labourers.

Now as regards artisans; their interest, considering them as a body, ought to be, and, I believe, is wonderfully adverse to war. I think it is one of the surest symptoms of progress in the present day, and one of those facts which most distinctly contradict Mauleverer's harsh views as regards the want of progress in mankind, that our British artisans, associating themselves with the artisans of other countries, stoutly protested against the continuance of the present war.

If we look at this matter rightly, we shall find that the artisan is, of all men, the man who, if he were guided by his interest, should be most averse from war. Look at the thousand odd ways in which artisanship is employed in an age of high civilization. The moment that war comes, all that tends to promote comfort or health, to create beauty, to delight fancy, is either restricted or abandoned in presence of the stern necessities of war.

Here, however, I am bound to declare to you a melancholy fact. It is a fact, though, which shows the greatness of mankind, and illustrates how prone men are to make light of and postpone

their nearest interests to sentiment and feeling. Ellesmere has said, and very justly, that those anecdotes are valuable which are not mere present witticisms; but which have "a before and an after," and which, in their humble way, open up long vistas of thought. I will give you a very pregnant anecdote, showing how the artisan will postpone his own interests when he has once got a political idea into his head. A friend of mine, a physician, became entangled in the crowd at Kennington on that memorable evening when a great Chartist row was expected, and when Louis Napoleon armed himself with a constable's staff to support the cause of order. My friend observed a young man of pleasant appearance, who was very busy in the crowd, and appeared to be a leader amongst them. Gradually, by the pressure of the crowd, the two were brought near together, and the good doctor had some talk with this fiery partisan. They exchanged confidences; and to his astonishment, the doctor found that this furious young Chartist gained his livelihood, and a very good livelihood too, by heraldic painting—by painting the coats-of-arms upon carriages. Now, if you can imagine this young man's darling enterprise to have been successful, if Chartism had

prevailed, what would have become of the painting of arms upon carriage-panels? I believe that my good doctor insinuated this suggestion to the young man, and that it was received with disdain. I must own, therefore, that the *utile*, even when brought home to a man's self, has much less to do with people's political opinions and desires, than might at first be supposed. Indeed, I would venture to maintain, that *no great change has ever been produced in the world by motives of self-interest.* Sentiment, that thing which many wise people affect to despise, is the commanding thing as regards popular impulses and popular action.

You must own that I have been very fair as regards what I have said about artisans. I have indicated by this story of the heraldic painter, that I am perfectly aware that a political opinion will thoroughly overcome the interest of this class, and may determine them for war; but I am sure that their interests point to peace; and, as they become more and more instructed, and less and less amenable to political passion or prejudice, they will become earnest favourers of peace. I rely much upon them now: and I look forward to still greater and surer support from them hereafter.

Now, with respect to the higher classes, let us look at the motives by which they are likely to be actuated; and let us see who, amongst them, are likely to be favourers of war, and who, on the contrary, are likely to view war with eminent disfavour.

Let us begin with the learned professions. The clergy protest, officially as it were, but at the same time very sincerely, against the horrors and cruelties of war; but they do not, and probably they cannot, do much as a body to prevent it. Observe how little head the clergy in France have made against the perpetration of this present war. I am not disposed to blame them overmuch. I am quite sure that as a body they are favourers of peace; but it is evident that they have either very little power to prevent war, or their peace-loving desires are overbalanced by political considerations having reference to the state of their Church.

I come now to the lawyers. To them war is not useful; for, after all, they thrive with the general thriving of the community in which they live. But, on the other hand, war is not specially injurious to them. Their dealings are with the richer classes, who are the latest to be pinched by

the dire calamities of war. A small tradesman suffers far more from war than a great lawyer does; but, again, his sufferings, as regards his interests, are not by any means so acute and pressing as those of the artisan. By the way, of course I except those artisans who are employed in manufacturing the munitions of war. Their number, however, when compared with the rest of the artisans, is insignificant.

I come now to the doctors. I contend that their interest does not affect them much either way. They are already so generous to the poor (I love the doctors) that they do not suffer much, pecuniarily speaking, when the poor become a little poorer. The doctors, as the lawyers, live upon the richer classes. They (the doctors) probably appreciate the sufferings caused by war—the physical sufferings—more accurately, and with more feeling, than any other persons do. I am therefore disposed to reckon them on my side; that is, on the side of those who detest and abhor war; and who would do everything in their power to prevent it throughout the world. But these doctors and surgeons—for of course I include surgeons—are but a small body, and a scattered body. The want of power to act in combination,

is a thing very clearly to be perceived as regards the medical profession. They can hardly fight their own battles, set aside the battles of other people. They have always been neglected by the State.

I now come to Science, Art, and Literature. I must thank you for your kindness in listening to me so patiently. I am making a speech to you, as it were, and a peripatetic speech [Mr. Milverton was walking up and down the room]; and I wish you to hear all that I have to say, without interrupting me, reserving your protests until I have finished.

I believe that I, and the people who think with me in this matter, have ardent supporters amongst the learned, the artistic, and the scientific; and, what is more, I venture to say that a similar statement may be made as regards the feelings of these classes throughout all ages. I asked Theodore Martin, who has written an admirable life of Horace (a life which shows to us not only the nature and domestic doings of Horace, but the aspect of the Roman world in which he lived), whether Horace was really a man of peace; and Martin referred me to that ode in which Horace, addressing Augustus, who brings back with him peace to Rome, beautifully enunciates the blessings of

peace. (You must not ill-naturedly remember those words of Horace's, *relictâ non bene parmulâ*, for Horace was no coward) :—

> Tutus bos etenim rura perambulat :
> Nutrit rura Ceres, almaque Faustitas :
> Pacatum volitant per mare navitæ :
> Culpari metuit Fides.

This is how Martin translates it :—

> For safe the herds range field and fen,
> Full-headed stand the shocks of grain,
> Our sailors sweep the peaceful main,
> And man can trust his fellow-men.

And then there is this charming stanza :—

> Now each man, basking on his slopes,
> Weds to his widow'd trees the vine,
> Then, as he gaily quaffs his wine,
> Salutes thee, God of all his hopes.

I should weary you, if I were to show you how, from the earliest times, the greatest men in Science, Literature, and Art have protested against needless warfare. You may say that it has been for their interest to make this protest: Science, Literature, and Art droop their heads when war uprears her gory figure. But the men of Science, Literature, and Art, are the most disinterested of mankind ; otherwise they would hardly have devoted themselves to Science, Literature, and Art.

Then, again, the civil servants are not so very fond of seeing men with cocks'-feathers in their shakos, reaping all the honours and rewards of the public service. Again—and this is a great subtlety—the whole tenor of their lives is adverse to the predominance of physical force. Now comes in my good Machiavelli. He would, I believe, say: If you wish war to be abstained from; further, and favour, and give power to this official class; so you will have a concentrated body close to the inmost springs of government, and very often moving these springs most effectually, who, by every motive that can actuate mankind, are profoundly adverse to war.

Lastly, I would ask you, can there be anything more unfortunate for the peace of the world than the military and civil services being confounded together? At this moment, is it not a thing to be greatly regretted, that a prime minister is at the same time a major in a regiment of cavalry?

Before I conclude, I must dispose of an objection which is, otherwise, sure to be made. It is that the pressure of war, whether actual or impending, is very different according to the different circumstances of the nations engaged, or likely to be engaged, in war. For instance, the pressure

of war in a country that is not likely to be invaded, is very different from that in a country which is likely to bear the brunt of the war within its own boundaries. This difference will, of course, very greatly affect the disposition to hinder or promote war, of the different classes and persons whose motives I have been considering. Again, an example of the effect of this difference of circumstance, I may refer to what I have said about the lawyers. I said that their interests were, comparatively speaking, very little touched by war. Indeed, litigation, which is a kind of warfare, and not the least formidable kind, may even be promoted by a state of war. Nevertheless, when a country comes to be largely invaded, and its principal cities besieged, law becomes as silent as Literature.

It would be almost impossible to exhaust the combinations of circumstances which would tend to vary the conclusions I have put forth as to the proneness to, or aversion from war, in different classes of the community. The utmost that can be done (which, however, it is very desirable should be done), is, to form some general conclusions, and then to see how the motives I have adduced as affecting different classes, will be

weakened or intensified by the peculiar circumstances of each case.

I have finished, and I pause for a reply.

[There was silence for a minute or two, and then Sir John Ellesmere replied.]

Ellesmere. I am not going to cavil at Milverton's speech. In order to reply to it, if I meant to reply, I should first have to make use of Sandy's short-hand powers, and to request him to write out in a fair and legible hand Milverton's twenty-minutes' speech; but there are some points respecting which I humbly ask for further facts, and more express details. Now one thing occurs to me as a matter requiring fuller explanation. I had thought that it had been generally allowed that times of discord and war had produced great men in all branches of human effort; and, therefore, that literary, artistic, and scientific personages were not called upon to protest so loudly against war as Milverton supposes.

Milverton. This is a common delusion. I have fought against it before, and I am ready to combat it now. I appeal to great historians, as to whether it is not true, as I maintain, that the greater progress in Art, Literature, and Science has uniformly been made during the few periods of

profound peace which this much-tormented world has hitherto enjoyed. Look at what was done in the thirty years following the battle of Waterloo.

Sir Arthur. In Science, yes; in Literature, yes; in Art, I doubt.

Milverton. Well, I do not pretend to have any masterful knowledge of this latter subject. My impression is strong, very strong, that I am right; but we will ask some one who does know. We will appeal to our friend Ruskin. If he decides against me, I will bow to his decision. But about Literature and Science, I am firm as the Fates. Do you suppose that Homer wrote while the siege of Troy was going on? Do you not admit that Virgil wrote the *Æneid* in times of peace? Do you not see that our own great writers wrote, if not in times of actual peace, in times when war did not really come near our shores?

I believe in the inevitable nature of things.

Ellesmere. Of course you do; of course we all do; that is merely one of your fine phrases.

Milverton. Well then, what I mean, is, that I believe that men are always governed by the same motives, and prepossessed by the same ideas. I

suppose you will admit that the arts of peace are preferable to the arts of war?

Ellesmere. Yes; but that has nothing to do with the subject.

Milverton. Can these two branches of Art flourish together at the same time?

Ellesmere. I don't know; that is the question at issue.

Milverton. Do you find, Mister Objector-General, that you can be absorbed by two different pursuits at the same time? Now I will come to a maxim of political economy which has been equally true in all ages—namely, "that the supply is regulated by the demand." You must know, too, that the thinking power of mankind is not unlimited. When warlike thought is demanded, it will be supplied to the exclusion of peaceful thought — of thought for the civilization and comfort of mankind. I will give you a very homely instance. You go, and try any of the great publishers of the day, whether they will accept any literary work of yours; and I am sure the world would be delighted, in ordinary times, to receive a work from the pen of Sir John Ellesmere. But the publishers will now turn a very cold shoulder to you, or to any other promising

young author. They will say, and say truly, "we cannot get anything else thought about, while this horrid war lasts."

Ellesmere. Never mind; what a blessing this war will be to future authors! I foresee 2,379 histories written about it, and 8,655 novels. How weary, in after days, we shall become of it!

Milverton. I see that Ellesmere is deviating into his cynical talk, and that he has no more real objection to urge against my discourse. The rest of you are silenced, if not convinced; and so I, for once, shall propose ending our discussion and taking a walk. I can tell you it is a much harder thing to make a speech to you critical fellows, than even to address a wearied London audience in an after-dinner speech.

Ellesmere. How artfully he rushes away from the conflict, not waiting to hear all that I could say against the predominance which he and his friend Machiavelli would wish to be given to the civil service, in which, however, he has been artful enough (true touch of Machiavelli!) to include us poor slaves to the public, members of Parliament, about whom I have heard him before now, when it suited his purpose, speak not quite so respectfully.

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But I am always willing to imbibe oxygen, in which, too, there may be a trace of ozone—you see how scientific I am becoming;—and so let us sally forth in full force, being ready, with the peaceful Milverton, to knock down anybody we may meet who ventures to differ from us in the least as regards the most effectual means of putting down war.

Now, Lady Ellesmere, put on your most dashing and warlike hat—you women are beginning to dress very much like general officers, and are indulging largely in the feathers and frippery of which I believe the cruel Milverton would deprive the defenders of our soil, in order to make them less attractive to the womankind; for you must know that that is the best way of diminishing their power.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

[I subjoin a fragment of conversation which took place during our walk.

Mr. Milverton suddenly said, "I should like to ask you all what you think has been one of the most indefensible things done in the course of the present war?"]

Ellesmere. Here comes one of Milverton's vast questions, which, suddenly turning round

upon you, he asks, and which it requires seven years of anxious consideration to answer properly. And then he insists on your giving an answer on the spot; as he did with me the other day, when he would make me expose my ignorance, as regards the number of stars to be seen by the unclothed eye.

Cranmer. Is it the needless destruction by the Prussians of some French village?

Milverton. No: those things are always unpremeditated, and are done in passion. Unpremeditated wickedness is the smallest, or at least the most pardonable of all human wickedness.

Sir Arthur. I know what it is.

Ellesmere. The two scribblers are always in wonderful accord with one another.

Sir Arthur. It is the publication of the Emperor's private correspondence.

Milverton. You are right, Sir Arthur, according to my notions.

You were saying, in a previous conversation, what a wonderful thing social life is in a great city—tens of thousands of people going about their business, and not more than one per ten thousand seeking to attain his ends by violence.

The Post-Office is not the least of the wonders of this civilization.

The sacredness of letters is one of the greatest triumphs of civilization. We live in an age when there is too little reticence; when publicity is the rule rather than the exception.

But, at any rate, private letters are *now* sacred with us.

Now I will admit that, in the times of the Commonwealth, it was not unreasonable that the correspondence between Henrietta Maria and Charles the First, implying so much treachery as it did, should have been made known to the world. But a more abominable thing has not been done in my time than the publication of the private correspondence of the Emperor. It was worse than a crime: it was a blunder. I place a very high value upon the word "gentleman." It includes the noblest ideal of honour, and not a little part of Christianity. It may be a boastful thing to say, but I believe that though we British may not have the finest manners in the world, we take a high place amongst the first gentlemen of Europe.

Now there never was a more ungentlemanly transaction than this publishing by the Provisional

Government of private letters, such as the letters of the Empress to the Emperor. I have been delighted to find that in railway-talk, and in omnibus-talk, this proceeding has been universally condemned in England. The true and just idea of what a gentleman should do, and of what he certainly should not do, permeates English society from the highest to the lowest; and I firmly believe that there is not one of the reddest of red republicans amongst us who would not condemn this proceeding.

[One other postscript, as it were, I must make to the foregoing conversation. In the course of our walk, we resumed our talk about Machiavelli, saying how curiously applicable to the present state of things were many of his *discorsi*. Sir Arthur remarked, that this was always the case with the writings of great men,—in fact, was the test of them,—namely, that they could not become obsolete. He said, that "while Sir John Ellesmere had been studying Science, he had borrowed Mr. Milverton's *Tacitus*, and had been refreshing himself with that great author, whose descriptions of the Germans were as applicable to the circumstances of the present day as anything we have

had from Machiavelli." When we returned home Sir Arthur showed me the following passage, which I cannot withhold from my readers.

"On the same side of Germany, bordering on the ocean, are the possessions of the Cimbri, a reduced community, but of historic grandeur.

"Vast ruins remain to confirm their traditions —such as an encampment on each bank of the river, having a circuit whose extent is a just measure of our belief that the people, capable of constructing it by their united labour, was numerous enough to raise the armies recorded. Our capital had reached its six hundred and fortieth year, when it was first startled by the arms of the Cimbri, in the consulship of Cæcilius Metellus and Papirius Carbo, from which date to the second consulship of Trajan is two hundred and ten years—so long does Germany take to conquer! In the course of so long a period each side has had its losses. Neither Samnium nor Carthage, neither Spain nor Gaul, not even Parthia, has read us more frequent lessons. The subjects of Arsaces have proved themselves less dangerous than the free warriors of Germany. What victory, except the slaughter of Crassus, has Asia, which, as soon as it had lost Pacorus, was struck down

by Ventidius, got to show against us? Whereas the Germans, with Carbo, and Cassius, with Scaurus Aurelius, Servilius Cæpio, and Cnæus Manlius, all defeated, or taken prisoners, have wrested five consular armies at once from the Roman commonwealth, and Varus and his three legions even from Cæsar (Augustus). Nor was it without paying dear that Caius Marius smote them in Italy; the immortal Julius in Gaul; Drusus, and Nero, and Germanicus, in their own retreats. Soon after this, the gigantic threats of Caius Cæsar (Caligula) ended in a ridiculous farce. Then followed peace; until, profiting by our factions and by our civil war, they stormed the winter quarters of our troops, put Gaul in jeopardy, and, although they were repulsed in that undertaking, lose, to this day, more battles in our despatches than in the field."]

CHAPTER VII.

[A NEIGHBOUR, who lives at some distance, came over to see us, and was kind enough to ask any of us, who were fishermen, to come and fish with him in some water that he had taken in the Itchen. Sir Arthur, Sir John, and myself, went. About the results of the fishing I would rather not speak. Sir John and Sir Arthur have, as it seems to me, no skill in the piscatorial art. I think I have; but Sir John *would* keep close to me, in order to have somebody to talk to, and to disentangle his line for him; and he seemed to think that noise and movement were attractive to the fish. A conversation that took place, as we we driven home, was very interesting to me; and it led to a change of our proceedings in the next conversation at home. Sir Arthur remarked to Sir John Ellesmere, "How very good Milverton's speech was the other day!"]

Ellesmere. I am sorry, Sir Arthur, I can't agree with you at all. I am sure I am as fond of the man as though he were not my brother-in-law; but, to confess the truth, the speech seemed to me very poor and ineffective. In the first place, it was manifestly a got-up affair. It had all been conned over thoroughly beforehand.

Sir Arthur. I do not see any harm in that.

Ellesmere. Well, perhaps not. Anyhow, it did not interest me. I put in some objections *pro formâ*, and in order that he might see I had been paying due attention. But now I will tell you my real objection to the whole thing. Milverton is a politician; by which I do not mean he is a party-man, but he expects great results in a matter of this kind, such as the prevention of war, by means of political handling. I do not expect any such results. You think me a very unromantic individual; but I hold, that if any great thing is done in this most important matter, it is more likely to be accomplished, even by some stirring book, or by the speechifying of some ardent enthusiast, such as a Peter the Hermit; by some peaceful crusade, as it were; or by the formation of some sect. I can't tell you exactly how it will be done; but it will be by something very

different from manœuvring class against class, patting one on the back, and discouraging another.

There is a very eminent person of the present day, to whose splendid talk I never listen with any pleasure. It always seems to me unreal; like the gibbering of ghosts, if there are such beings. This same effect was produced upon me by this speech of Milverton's, which you admire. In a word, I did not care to answer it, even if I could have done so.

Sir Arthur. I really think, Ellesmere, you are too hard upon it; and often, though I know you are half in joke, you seem to me to come down upon Milverton too severely.

Ellesmere. No; in reality I am more amused by him, and interested in him, than any of you. I must tell you what he said to me yesterday, in the greenhouse—Milverton is always more alive when he is in an atmosphere where the thermometer ranges from 87° to 110°. I have often thought, that, if I were in any very great difficulty, and wanted good advice, I would send for Milverton; put him into a heated oven; and hear what he would say upon the subject submitted to him. If he ever says anything good, it is when the weather is very warm. However,

he really said a very good thing. I was more pleased with it than with anything I had heard him say for the last three years. Perhaps it was because it hit me very hard. You may not see anything in it, Sir Arthur.

We were talking, as usual, about the war; and he diverged into the general subject of quarrelling. He said a number of very strange things about it. The one that struck me most was this. He was describing the course of a quarrel, of which one person's ill-temper was the principal cause; and he said, it would soon end but for one thing, namely, that the aggressive person cannot make it up with himself; and so he goes on raging, and raving, and laying down fresh lines for future quarrel. He could forgive you, the other side, easily enough: it is himself he cannot forgive for having shown his temper and begun the thing. That is what makes him so cross. How swiftly peace would be made between them if the other side could understand or imagine this feeling. The main art for a passionate man to acquire, is, the forgiveness of himself in the first instance.

When he uttered these sayings, I felt as though I had received a blow; for all that he said came so home to me.

Feeling guilty, I turned to take a look at Milverton's face, to see if I could discern whether he meant to allude to me when he gave this instance of how quarrelling fails to be broken off at the first outset. But he had taken up a tortoise, and was philosophizing about the creature. "Look, Ellesmere," he said, "at this much-underrated reptile. Even naturalists, who, like biographers, are not prone to underrate the merits of the creatures they write about, have little to say in favour of the moral and intellectual qualities of the tortoise. I cannot maintain that it has an arched and noble brow. But see what high qualities this reptile is manifesting at the present moment:—for instance, Faith, based upon Experience and Judgment. In general, it is a most timid creature; but it has discovered, that when this monster, myself, takes it up, it is for the purpose of petting; and consequently it stretches out its little head to be stroked, and fixes its brilliant little eyes upon me confidently. Observe, still further, it is mumbling my finger affectionately. It can bite most severely. In this action, it shows that it possesses the rudiments of the highest fun, wit, and humour, such as they appear in mankind. It makes as if it

would bite, and doesn't bite. It appreciates, perhaps without having read Locke's works, Locke's definition of wit, and knows that there must be unexpectedness in it. It thinks that I shall expect to be bitten, and that there will be fun in its not biting. What great gifts have been given to every creature, even to the meanest! And then, too, it is so fond of music, and would attend the Philharmonic with the most discriminating pleasure."

Having heard enough about the merits of the tortoise, and not relishing a temperature of at least 88°, fearing, too, lest Milverton should return to the subject of quarrelling, and should say something that would hit me still harder, I slunk away quietly.

However, to return to the subject of quarrelling, I am sure that one often goes on "raging and raving," as Milverton expressed it, because one is so angry with oneself for having begun to rage and rave.

Sir Arthur. It is a subtle remark; but I do not feel as much struck by it as you are.

Ellesmere. You have a much more composed and well-balanced nature than I have, Sir Arthur. But don't you agree with me, Sandy? Have not

you, in your persevering Scotch way, heaped coals upon the fire, merely because you were disgusted with yourself for having lit the fire at all ?

Johnston. Oh, I thoroughly understand what you mean, Sir John. What you say puts me in mind of a feeling I often had in my boyish quarrels.

Ellesmere. I tell you what we will do. Before you began to favour us with your company, Sir Arthur, we used to get Milverton to write an essay, and then we used to comment upon it. Let us do the same thing now. We will get Milverton to write us an essay on quarrelling. It will be sure to apply, more or less, to the present war, and will give pith and point to our conversations on this subject.

Besides, it will amuse Milverton ; and I pity him very much just now. Everything is going against him. Think what must be the dismay in his mind at the present state of affairs. For years he has been apprehensive about some general European war being inflicted on mankind. You were not with us, Sir Arthur, when he used to oppress us with long essays about war, which, to my poor thinking, seemed, at the time,

rather irrelevant. I am sure that he must be very down-hearted now.

Sir Arthur. I don't perceive it.

Ellesmere. I do. There is a film of disappointment coming over his mind. You must notice how much more he listens to Mauleverer, without opposing him, than he used to do. Of course, being such an obstinate fellow, he will go on talking and writing and speaking about his favourite themes; but I know, from something that he said to me the other day, that he has less heart and hope than he used to have. It is a good trait in these obstinate fellows, that even when they are sodden with ill-success, they go on just the same, as if they were upborne by good success; but then the energy to do so is all taken out of themselves, as it were.

Sir Arthur. I don't quite understand you.

Ellesmere. Oh, don't you know that when work is prosperous, or likely to be prosperous, it does some of itself for itself?

Sir Arthur. That is a queer theory.

Ellesmere. It is a true one. Prosperous work brings with it the energy for the work. Unprosperous work has to pump up, as it were, all the requisite energy for the work out of the worker.

What a continually amusing thing the study of character is! Now, for the life of me I could not go on hammering at one set of ideas, and always taking the same side. I don't mind confessing to you, Sir Arthur, that when I have argued on one side of a case, doing the best I can for my client, I should often like to jump up on the other, and bowl over a few of my own arguments. If I were Milverton, I should set to work to show forth the wonderful beauties and advantages of war: I should scout sanitary science, and point out the blessings of dirt and disease: and I should show the merits of inhumanity to animals. No; I don't think I could do that; but I could take the opposite side in all the rest of Milverton's favourite topics. But he can't, poor fellow! and —to speak metaphorically—whether it rains or whether it shines, he will go on in his course to the end of the chapter.

It is a grand thing to have something of a lawyer in one's composition. The reason why we fellows live so long, and are such a lengthened blessing to the world, is, that we do not fret our souls and derange our minds by harping on one strain of thought. We are very wise people, in our generation, I can tell you. By the way;

talking of our cleverness reminds me that I promised to explain to you why Milverton praised the Treaty of Paris, the other day. I know what he meant. It was not the main part of the Treaty of Paris, but a sort of codicil to it—a Declaration which was made at the Congress, and which was, indeed, a great advance in civilization.

Sir Arthur. I don't know to what you allude.

Ellesmere. I can tell you; for I had to give an opinion about the operation of a certain clause in it. It is a very short affair.

[Sir John then gave us the substance of the following clauses, to the exact words of which he afterwards referred me.

"1. Privateering is, and remains, abolished.

"2. The neutral flag covers enemies' goods, with the exception of contraband of war.

"3. Neutral goods, with the exception of contraband of war, are not liable to capture under enemy's flag.

"4. Blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective; that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of the enemy."

For the remainder of the drive they continued

to talk about the Treaty of Paris. When we got home, we persuaded Mr. Milverton to set about writing an essay upon quarrelling, which I read to them a day or two afterwards. This is the essay :—

Quarrelling.

The man, not being a hermit in the Thebais, or a saint on a pillar, who says he will never quarrel, is a very foolish person. There are even such things as judicious quarrels—quarrels of deliberate choice, not the children of anger or of necessity. That wisest of Lord Chamberlains, my Lord Polonius, does not bid Laertes never quarrel, but merely says :—

> Beware
> Of entrance to a quarrel.

And, indeed, it is a thing to be very wary of, and mainly on account of the bystander. That third person who, in general, and with so much reason, prides himself upon his disengaged wisdom as a looker-on, is apt to be woefully wrong in his judgment of a quarrel. Moreover, it is nearly certain that he will condemn both parties; and so it is clear that you will do yourself some damage

in his repute of you by any entrance into any quarrel. For what bystander is industrious enough to consider, with all the labour that a just judgment requires, the causes and motives of the quarrel?

Ofttimes he is totally deceived, and places the balance of wrongfulness upon that party or person who is least to blame. This occurs when there have been a series of insults, slights, or disparagements, patiently borne by the one side, which side, in the quarrel that the bystander happens to witness, seems to have broken out into an unreasonable passion upon a very trivial cause. It is as when one sees a river, that has long gone underground, break out suddenly, and the beholder says, "Here is a rush of waters from some mysterious origin," little knowing for how long a course the quiet river has flowed underground, augmenting its volume from many hidden springs. Sometimes it seems almost a fatality, that the most injured person should break out into quarrelsomeness upon a most, apparently, inadequate occasion. It reminds one of the old story of the last feather that breaks the camel's back. For these reasons a quarrel is greatly to be eschewed, inasmuch as it is

nearly certain to lower your repute with the bystander.

Still there are quarrels which should resolutely be entered into, on deliberate purpose. Strange to say, and lamentable to say, domestic quarrels are of this kind. To use a common phrase, they "clear the atmosphere;" and, moreover, it is to be remembered, that almost any state of things is better than quiet dislike, or growing disgust. It is but too true that lovers may be made more ardent, friends more friendly, associates more willing to listen to our just claims, by an occasional quarrel. But then, as everybody knows, these quarrels must be very rare.

One of the most important things to be borne in mind while considering this subject, is, that most quarrels are quarrels that depend upon words. These form the main substratum of all contentiousness. You may do a man a substantial injury, and be easily forgiven. But utter only one injurious word, and there is a fine opening for a quarrel. Also, in the conduct of the quarrel, there is nothing so much to beware of as the use of injurious words. Some people transact a quarrel so neatly that they invariably appear to be in the right. Exaggera-

tion is always punished, and never more speedily than when employed in the transaction of a quarrel. If possible, when in presence of your adversary, understate your case against him; and, as regards the nicety of your expressions, talk as you would have talked, if both of you were wearing swords.

There is one thing respecting quarrels, which is almost too obvious to need mentioning; and yet it is worth while mentioning it, if the doing so would impress its utility upon any one human being. Quarrelling, as a rule, partakes of anger; anger, as certainly, partakes of unwisdom. If, therefore, to use the common expression, you are resolved to "have it out" with somebody who has offended you, the first thing to be resolved upon, is, to allow a little time to elapse, if only a few hours, before you begin to attack the offender. There is probably no greater surprise of the every-day kind occurring to men, than the surprise which they must feel, if they observe their own minds carefully, at the difference in their sentiments with regard to any trouble or offence, according to the time at which they take up the consideration of it. At first, as we all know, the offence occupies the whole

extent of the mental vision. In a very short time it begins to recede into its proper place, and is one thing out of many which are within the presence of the mind, instead of being *the* one thing. That hackneyed illustration, which must be very suitable to mankind because it is so hackneyed, namely, the Sibyl's Books, is applicable here also, though in a very different sense from that in which it is usually applied. Postponement, in this case, is sure to reduce the weight and number of the books of glowing words in which the original offence is written. In the days of our forefathers, when blood-letting was one of the curative methods most in vogue upon any disturbance of the nervous system, it would, doubtless, often have been a very judicious thing to be bled after receiving any great offence. In our age—which is, I suppose, medically speaking, wiser—to postpone taking any notice of the offence is the only means left for subduing the unreasonable affections of the mind, now that blood-letting is entirely discarded.

In treating of this subject, much account is to be taken of the differences of men's temperaments; and there are few of their attributes in which they differ more largely and more pro-

foundly. There is the man of hardened temperament, who can go to sleep in ten minutes after a severe quarrel; and there is the sensitive man, who frets for days and nights after he has had a quarrel, even with some indifferent person, and though he holds himself to have been entirely in the right, and has no touch of remorse in the matter. Such a man should avoid even, what I would call, business-like and sensible quarrels, for they create an atmosphere which he cannot imbibe with comfort or safety; whereas the hard man will make good profit out of them.

To show how different are the temperaments and the natures of men, as bearing on the subject of quarrelling, an instance may be taken from the conduct of two brothers, which was related by the third brother. "My elder brother," he said, "is admirable in conducting a quarrel, or a difficult matter tending to a quarrel, if he is permitted to conduct it in writing only. Moderation seems to flow from his pen in exquisitely judicious sentences. If, however, we trust him with an interview, it is all over with our cause, and we are involved in a hopeless turmoil of offensive disputation. With my younger brother, the case is exactly opposite. The gentlest, the justest,

and most persuasive of men (also with the requisite amount of firmness), when dealing with his fellow-men in an interview, he is a veritable Turk, if you trust him alone with pen, ink, and paper, and he does not see about him the human face divine."

Now the foregoing is a most significant fact. There are people who should never dispute upon paper; and there are others who should never dispute *vivâ voce*. There have been eminent statesmen who have been totally ignorant of their own qualifications in this matter; who have written when they should have spoken, and spoken when they should have written.

The common saying, that it takes two to make a quarrel, and the much deeper saying of the Spaniard, that the man who makes the rejoinder —who says the third thing—is the man upon whose shoulder the quarrel rests, are both of them true sayings. I venture to carry the thought still further, and to maintain, that, in most cases, if you can make it up with yourself, you can almost immediately make it up with your opponent. That is, in the accidental quarrels, which are, of course, by far the most numerous. What happens is, that you say or

do something which you secretly regret; but your regret turns to anger, and you go on enlarging your saying, or your doing, almost from spite against yourself. Make friends with yourself, and you will soon find that you can make friends with your opponent.

Then there are the quarrels that arise from affection, are nurtured by affection, and are among the most difficult to bring to a happy issue. Coleridge, in his *Christabel*, has admirably described this kind of quarrel.—

> Alas! they had been friends in youth;
> But whispering tongues can poison truth;
> And constancy lives in realms above;
> And life is thorny; and youth is vain:
> And to be wroth with one we love,
> Doth work like madness in the brain.

The last cause, however, that he names, is, in most cases, the prevailing one. Its strength lies in this:—that you think the person you love has no right to offend you. You could bear everything from an enemy, but not from him. Cæsar covered his face with his mantle when he found Brutus among the conspirators. If we were sincere with ourselves, we should own that we think the claims of Love and Friendship

ought to be stronger than the claims of Justice and Truth.

There should be a certain perfection aimed at in the conduct of a quarrel, if it is to lead, as it ought always to lead to a reconciliation. There should be no root left from which another quarrel, similar in nature to the original one, could possibly grow up. I need hardly remark, that, if this maxim applies with some force to the disputes of individuals, it applies with a great deal more force to the disputes and quarrels of nations — and for the following reason; an individual is but a short-lived and transitory creature. A patched-up quarrel may sufficiently serve his or her purpose, even when it is evident that, both parties surviving, the quarrel must break out anew. But the case is very different with nations, for they are long-lived creatures, and a root of discord left (although what is visible of the evil thing above ground, is swept off) is nearly certain to produce a renewal of the dispute, and probably of war, to the arbitrament of which national disputes are ultimately referred.

All the best maxims for the conduct of warfare and negotiation, apply to the management of a domestic quarrel. As in warfare, build a bridge

for the enemy to escape over, as it makes him retreat much sooner; and always remember that your *if* is a great peacemaker. Give your opponent the full benefit of that potent little word. Then, as in negotiation, do not half state your case, or the quarrel will have to be gone over again. Timidity of statement is as much to be avoided as exaggeration. When I said, "understate your case," I meant your case as against your opponent. Do not understate your own claim; but understate his neglect of it. Rather assume that he has not been as wicked as he has been in ignoring your affection, your merits, or your dignity. (Good Heavens, how men will quarrel about their dignity!)

If there is any time in a man's life when, what generosity of nature he may have is especially serviceable to him, it is in the midst of a quarrel. Say but one generous or kind thing, and it is wonderful how soon it will be responded to. This is to be expected; for the warmth evoked by a quarrel, will rush very rapidly towards any offer of conciliation. It is from this circumstance that quarrels are occasionally most useful, as developing a warmth, which burns up long-continued petty causes of dislike or disfavour. Coldness is

the result of most poisons, and the cause of most deaths, in the world of affection as in that of physical life.

In preventing, conducting, or getting out of a quarrel, most useful aid is to be found in the exercise of imagination. It is an effort of imagination only that can enable you to appreciate fully the claims and motives, and especially the passions and prejudices, of the other side. For this reason never quarrel with a stupid man or woman, if you can possibly avoid it, as such a person will never for a moment be able to realize your conception of the matter in dispute, and will, therefore, never make due allowance for you. If you are obliged to quarrel with a stupid person, endeavour to contrive that he should be represented, or at least accompanied, by a clever person, who may aid him in understanding your view of the quarrel. So largely is imagination useful in the prevention, or in the wise conduct, of a dispute, that it would hardly be too much to assert, that a man of the highest order of imagination would find the greatest difficulty in quarrelling at all. One feels that Shakespeare could hardly have quarrelled with anybody, because he would have had such a keen dramatic sense of the feelings of the other

side, that from pity and good-nature he would have been sure to have yielded the point at once.

Again, if you wish to avoid quarrelling, be pleased to entertain the profoundest belief of the extreme inaccuracy of men, women, and children, as regards the repetition of what they hear. Hearsay is the fruitful parent of many of the most malignant quarrels that infest mankind.

When negotiation leads to quarrelling, it mostly happens in this way: — A demand is made by one side; it is held to be utterly unreasonable by the other; and a counter-demand for retractation is sent back. The retractation is not made in full. On the contrary, though the original demand is somewhat modified, it is substantially made again. The counter-demand, applying to the modified, as well as to the original proposition, is renewed. By this time both parties have become rather warm. There are a few more negotiations, ending at last in a hearty quarrel.

Or, to take another instance, a demand is made on one side; is not utterly refused; is even, indeed, accepted by the other side, but with certain modifications, which, when submitted to

the party originally making the demand, are deemed to be important. This party does not appreciate the comparatively friendly reception of his original demand; thinks by pressure to get more; and renews the original demand. The other side, finding no recognition of his friendliness, becomes haughty and stiff, and returns an answer less favourable, at least in expression, than his first one. And so there goes on a constant interchange of unacceptable propositions. In short, in this case, as in the preceding one, the giving way on either side is not done handsomely. Thus, upon the balances of difference, sometimes amounting only to very small quantities, the negotiation takes the form of a quarrel. And so mighty nations, as well as little boys in the street, rush into fighting. It is worth while to see how it happens amongst these boys in the street. "Put your foot there if you dare," says one boy to another. The other boy does not put his foot *there*, but to *near there;* and after another challenge or two of the same nature, neither frankly received nor frankly declined, the negotiation turns into active combat. The same thing occurs in domestic life; and, when you hear of people leading a cat and dog life (very unjust,

this metaphor to dogs and cats, who, when they live together, mostly come to amiable conclusions!) it is that neither side maintains its own resolutely, or gives way handsomely. Of course, the ultimate reason of this state of things is pride, or the desire to appear consistent in the eyes of the bystander. The greatest quarrels that have arisen on the face of the earth, have been arrived at by one or other of the methods above described.

I have now endeavoured to show you how, in my opinion, you should avoid a quarrel; how you should enter into it; how you should hold your ground in it; by what means you should conduct it; and, especially, how you should get out of it. Any knowledge concerning the last clause of the foregoing sentence is worth all the rest.

[Mr. Milverton had to leave the room before I had finished reading the essay, as a neighbour had called to see him upon some parish business. After I had finished my reading, the essay was discussed, and was generally approved, even Sir John Ellesmere saying that it certainly kept close to the subject. Then Mr. Cranmer spoke.]

Cranmer. I was thinking, all the time, wherever does he get his facts and instances from. He is the least quarrelsome of mortal men. When I was in office, I had some very tough things to settle with him, and had to oppose him vehemently, but he never quarrelled with me.

Ellesmere. He is too much in the clouds, for a great part of his life, to have much spare time or attention to devote to quarrelling with us poor creatures, who wisely abide upon the solid earth. He can be very passionate, as we have seen lately, but not quarrelsome. And then he would think it so very undignified—just like Sir Arthur, who is far too great a "swell" to quarrel with anybody, if he can possibly avoid it.

Lady Ellesmere. I do not see why John should seek a second-rate motive, to account for an unquarrelsome disposition. I suppose he thinks that all men are naturally as contentious as he is.

Sir Arthur. Cranmer has raised a great question which has often perplexed me. Consider the great writers of fiction. What an affluence of characters there is in their writings. I mean such writers as Shakespeare, Scott, Molière, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and the rest

of them. Where do they find these characters? Is it Experience? is it Imagination? If it is the conjunction of the two, what are the limits of each?

Ellesmere. Perplex yourself no more, Sir Arthur; I can explain it all thoroughly. My recent scientific studies——

[*Enter* MILVERTON.

Milverton. Is Ellesmere beginning to take upon himself the airs of a scientific man?

Ellesmere. I am merely explaining to them where the great writers, such as Shakespeare, Scott, and Dickens, and where the small writers, such as Milverton, take their characters and their examples from. The study of the Infinitesimal explains everything. What they do take, is a germ-cell; and when you have read as much as I have read about these interesting little atomic structures, you will know what they can be made to do, if properly developed. But, without joking, I will explain to you what I think happens to these men, and I will take a particular case. Scott, sitting in court as "the sherra," witnesses the manifestation of some oddity, or some peculiarity, some trait of greatness or of smallness, in man or woman (and, out of court, I would add "in dog").

This is the germ-cell for him. Coming into his mind, it has fallen into the proper *nidus* for development. Once he has seen or heard a Saddletree take the greatest interest in a cause not pertaining to him; and the whole of the Saddletree character is almost at that moment an accomplished fact in his mind. So, with some trait of his faithful Purdie, such as when that trusty henchman vehemently contended that certain trees should not be cut down, whereas Sir Walter as vehemently declared that they should, and at the end of their walk together Purdie says, "I think I'll tak' your *advice*, Sir Walter;" there was a germ-cell of Andrew Fairservice in *Rob Roy*, and of Richie Moniplies, of Castle Collop, in the *Fortunes of Nigel*. The pertinacity, and the abounding self-conceit of these two well-drawn characters, were all contained in some such germ-cell. I hold with Locke, a favourite writer of Milverton's, who learns from him to dive down even into the abstruse nature of tortoises, *Nihil esse in intellectu, quod non prius erat in sensu*, that, in fact, there is no knowledge but that which has its origin in experience.

Milverton. I beg leave to differ entirely.

Sir Arthur. And so do I.

Ellesmere. What a foolish fellow I am to get involved in metaphysical subtleties, when I might have kept to Science, and abided by incontrovertible experiences. However, you now know what I mean, and I ask, is my theory a good one, or is it not?

Sir Arthur. I think it is a good one.

Milverton. The poor author is impatient to hear what his critical friends will say about the essay.

Ellesmere. We were all very laudatory; we all agreed that it might have been better, but that it was not so bad.

Milverton. Such hearty praise entirely rewards me for the pains I took in writing it.

But I want now to illustrate some of the statements I made in the essay, by referring to an account of a quarrel, which I believe to be the best account of any quarrel that has ever been given in Literature—I need hardly say that it is the quarrel of Brutus and Cassius, in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*. Here is the volume of Shakespeare, which I took care to have by me. First observe how soon the quarrel deviates from things into words, and also how these words are misrepresented by both of the persons quarrelling.

Judge then how many quarrels must arise from hearsay and its misrepresentations. Cassius says :—

> I am a soldier, I,
> Older in practice, abler than yourself
> To make conditions.

Upon this saying of Cassius, the quarrel instantly grows much warmer. It is shortly afterwards that Brutus says :—

> Away, slight man !

You will find, if you read this scene aloud, that from the time when Cassius has said—

> I am a soldier, I,
> Older in practice,

to the time when Brutus misquotes him, the intervening words would not take much more than a minute to read.

> *Brutus.*—You say, you are a better soldier :
> Let it appear so ; make your vaunting true,
> And it shall please me well : For mine own part,
> I shall be glad to learn of noble men.

Then Cassius corrects this misrepresentation ; but you must especially observe that he mis-

represents what he had previously said, and is not at all confident as to what he did say.

Cassius.—I said, an elder soldier, not a better :
Did I say, better?

Now what he *did* say, was "older in *practice*, abler than yourself to make conditions"—as being the more worldly-wise of the two, as Cassius would naturally think.

Then observe another point. This quarrel would never have been got over, without an interview. Writing letters would only have made matters worse. I can't prove that from any particular passage; but I feel that I am right in making the statement.

Lastly, come to the main point. How is it that the quarrel comes to an end? Only by Cassius ceasing to contend, and not indulging in denunciations, but in lamentations that are almost abject.

There is my dagger,
And here my naked breast;
* * * * *
I, that denied thee gold, will give my heart :
Strike, as thou didst at Cæsar; for I know,
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lov'dst him better
Than ever thou lov'dst Cassius.

Brutus is immediately mollified. All the

warmth that had been aroused by anger, deviates into tenderness, and the reconciliation of the two friends is one of the most touching things ever written, even by Shakespeare. I remember, when I was a child of six years old, that it was one of my first reading lessons, and I hated reading it, exceedingly, for I always felt inclined to cry over it.

Ellesmere. Of course, we have seen how, in this essay, you have made some allusions to the terrible war we are at present witnessing,—as, for instance, when you speak of the necessity of extracting every root of the cause of quarrel, applying your remark especially to the quarrels of Nations. I wish now to make an observation, to which I think you are bound to give some answer. You admit that, as regards private and domestic quarrels, there should be some preparation for them. Should there not also be some preparation for national quarrels, especially when they are perceived to be inevitable, or, at any rate, highly probable?

Sir Arthur. He is right, Milverton. I do not wish to say anything rude; but I think you yourself will admit, that in the present state of Europe, it is verging on the Utopian to imagine

that you can persuade any two or three of the principal nations to agree to a reduction of armaments. I do not say that the time may not come, when your pacific theories may possibly enter into practice; but surely the present is not that time.

Milverton. I am sure you will admit that you have not often met a human being who has a more thorough detestation of war than I have, or a greater dislike to needless preparation for it. I object to the maxim, *Si vis pacem, para bellum.* I do not say, "If you want peace, prepare for war;" but I am obliged to confess that there are occasions when a nation must say to itself, "You can hardly expect to avoid war; and if you wish to prevail in war, you must prepare for it." A nation may see that it has entered into such treaties and guarantees; also that its colonial possessions may be of such an extended character; that, with every disposition for maintaining peace, it cannot reasonably expect to be let alone. Then, having an almost moral certainty that it will not escape conflict, or at least to give a menace, which will be futile unless the means of carrying out that menace are close at hand, it ought to prepare, and must prepare, for war. The great defect of

modern statesmanship has been the not looking far enough forward. Statesmen have often been as well contented as members of the Stock Exchange, to arrange their transactions for the next month, and to look no further.

Sir Arthur. I liked what you said, Milverton, about the quarrels of affection. I suppose you had in your mind not only private quarrels of that sort, but the quarrels of nations as well. If the Americans loved us less; if they did not, indeed, value our regard more than that of all the world besides; they would not be so huffy with us. And, on the other hand, if we did not care far more for them than for all other nations, we should not be so vexed at their huffiness, and be prone to be huffy in return.

Milverton. For my own part, I can never view an American otherwise than as a fellow-countryman, once removed. I see very little essential difference between him and one of ourselves. I fancy—but perhaps this is a fancy—that he speaks a little nasally. He tells me—but perhaps this is a fancy on his part—that I do the same. But his thoughts are as my thoughts, except, perhaps, in one thing,—that he dotes upon extension of territory, and that I certainly

do not. I should feel it to be a sort of murder to kill an American, even in battle. I should, perhaps, be killing a man who is the exact counterpart of myself. I believe, as you know, intensely in race. There are, doubtless, Milvertons in America; and this very man whom I might kill, might be, as I perhaps am, an exact resemblance in nature, form, and character, to some common ancestor. You know our friend R——. In his dining-room, just behind where the master of the house sits, there is the portrait of an ancestor who lived in the times of Charles I. I declare, if our friend were called out of the room unobservedly, and it were not for the difference of dress, the man in the picture might descend and take his place at the dinner-table, and no one of the guests would find out the difference. And so it might be with me, and some American cousin of mine —both of us being exactly similar chips of the same old block. And then, (for these desperately unlucky things occur in real life as well as in novels), I am to kill this counterpart of myself. I decline to do so, or to run the chance of doing so, if I can possibly avoid it.

Ellesmere. I must tell you a droll idea that has come into my mind. The two Milvertons would

be the two most indolent men in their respective armies. They would affect to be very courageous, for indolent men are always afraid of their indolence being mistaken for want of courage. They would, accordingly, be well to the front. They would, however, be lying down, having made a kind of sofa of baggage and knapsacks. Then they would take what are vulgarly called "pot shots" at one another. But this pleasing occupation would be occasionally interrupted by their making notes for future essays, or for *Thoughts on the Present Campaign*, or for a great work on *The Folly of Soldiering*. Both of them being bad shots, very little harm would be done either way, but they would furnish great amusement to the armies. And, as nothing promotes good fellowship so much as laughter on a common subject, they might be the means of making a lasting peace. Observe, that Milverton, much as he detests war, does not decline to go to battle with any other people than his dear American cousins.

Milverton. Never mind his nonsense. The greatest, and the most dangerous error, that at this moment besets the European family of nations, is that Englishmen, Scotchmen, and

Irishmen do not love fighting. Being rather a sombre race (at any rate the English and the Scotch), nothing would delight us more than fighting. For war, whatever may be its evils, chases away dulness. And, as for the Irish, they love fighting for the fun of it. They are always anxious to find the "jontlemen who will have the kindness to tread on the tail of their registered paletôts." And no people in the world fight better.

But we are all restrained by the fear of doing something very wrong, in going to war. To speak the honest truth, and in words not common in these mealy-mouthed days, our rulers, and all those who could throw in their influence for war, are dreadfully afraid of being damned for doing so. They have come to the belief, that God does not approve of war; and therefore they will not be driven into it except by stern necessity. But, granted the existence of that necessity, and that the burden of a tender conscience be removed from the British mind on its entrance into any war, the great mass of the British people are as merry as crickets. I have watched this feeling in my fellow-countrymen; and, to say the truth, in my own self.

Ellesmere. You are quite right, Milverton; even Cranmer, on such occasions, has no objection to a loan—a transaction which absolutely horrifies him in other times. It all comes from our likeness to Fairy. I do really think that no Englishman thoroughly understands his fellow-countrymen, unless he has kept a bull-dog. Without any joking, bull-dogs are wonderfully like us. They are the least interfering of animals. Observe Fairy. She follows at our heels, wrapped in a surly kind of enjoyment; never going up to other people, never yappeting at the heels of horses. In fact she is a silent, steady, industrious kind of dog, who would get a prize for minding her own business. But once make that business war, and see with what animation, with what determination, and with what joy, this solid creature goes into action. Then, contrast the conduct of our greyhound, Rose, who has something to say to every cur she meets, and not always a friendly saying; who makes her way into every shop; pokes her nose into people's hands, to see if there is anything for her; and will absolutely startle and horrify two young lovers, by rushing in between them, and almost saying to them, "What folly are you going to commit?" Whereas, Fairy

passes them by contemptuously, only hoping that they may some day quarrel, and that she may be obliged to take a side.

Cranmer. If Ellesmere once gets upon the subject of dogs, it is very difficult to stop him.

[The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of the second editions of the morning papers. There had been a battle, and the letters of the correspondents teemed with descriptions of the horrors of the battle-field after the engagement. We could talk of nothing else. Mr. Milverton then gave us a description of the photographs of some battle-fields in America, which had been sent to his friend Dickens, and which they had looked over together. I now resume an account of the conversation as it proceeded.]

Milverton. I need hardly tell you that we were horror-stricken as we looked over these things.

We thought, that much as photography has done for the world, the best thing it had ever accomplished was these photographs, as they are such potent dissuaders from war. We thought so then. If my dear friend were alive now, he would probably agree with me that the world seems to have entered into such a career of madness that nothing can stop its folly.

Sir Arthur. I should like to have been with you. Dickens would have been sure to make such shrewd remarks.

Milverton. He did. He pointed out how the dead men all lay upon their backs, and he noticed a peculiar swelling of the body that was visible in all of them. But what I am always thinking of in these times, is not the dead, but those who are left wounded—fatally wounded—on the battle-field; and not even so much of their physical agonies, as of what may be their thoughts as they lie untended for hours, perhaps for days, slowly stiffening into death.

Cranmer. Mayhap they think but little.

Milverton. With many it may only be pain—masterful pain,—the pain of a wounded animal—that absorbs the whole mind of the dying man; but if any one of them thinks away for a moment from his pain, what must be his thoughts? It is not likely that he has read his Shakespeare; but surely the thought, if not the expression, of the dying Mercutio comes to his lips—"A plague o' both your houses!" and he roughly curses in his inmost soul both King and Kaiser. No longer buoyed up by hatred (there never, perhaps, was much of that feeling in him), and no longer even

supported by excitement, the whole madness of the thing he has been concerned in, is revealed to him. Indignation consumes his soul, an indignation more profound than that of the dying gladiator, who thought of his "young barbarians at play;" an indignation more profound, I say, because he, the dying soldier, has had, or seems to have had, some particle of free-will in the matter. He has, at least, shouted forth vain-glorious boastings, and has joined in all that tavern exultation which forms such a ludicrous and horrible prelude to serious warfare. But all this seems to him now to belong to a former state of existence, and to have been transacted in another world. For now, wisdom, ever-halting, mostly too late, has come upon him hand-in-hand with death!

Perhaps there is a sound of music in the camp of his own comrades, which his feeble voice cannot reach. They are merry there, and he hears the song which he, too, had often joined in singing at the tavern and on the march; but its strains are not so inspiriting as they were then, and are but a mockery of his sufferings.

Is he a lover? He thinks of *her*. It is not always of their sorrowful parting that he thinks;

for that strangely errant and ungovernable thing, memory, carries him back, perhaps, to some fond hour, hitherto forgotten,—as when, one summer day, she threw wild flowers in his face while they were walking by the river-side, and was shy, and would not come as near to him as he wished; but never looked more beautiful. There is a strange complacency in his mind at the thought that he will be so much mourned over by her. If this bleeding would but stop, he would scribble something to her, at least write her name. But it is so cold, and he must sleep for a few minutes. He will write her name when he awakes. But he never does awake.

Is he a son, too young, perhaps, to have been smitten very deeply with love for a maiden? His dying thoughts are wholly with his mother. No one scene, either of dread parting or of playful affection, brings her image before him, for, from his mother it has been continuous love; and it is the fond recollection of his whole short life-time, shared with her, that is present to his mind at once. Her grief, which he knows will not cease until her life ceases, is no consolation to him.

Is he a husband, and a father? His are the bitterest feelings. There is no consolation here—

at least, no earthly consolation. What a world this is, in which he leaves those dear ones, is but too clearly manifest to him from the way in which he has been made to depart from it. It would be a temptation worthy of the Arch-Tempter himself, standing by that dying soldier, to try what portion of his soul's welfare he would imperil, so that he might be permitted to behold his wife and children once again, if only in this dying hour. He listens for aid to come: to him life is still inexpressibly dear. He hears the galloping of horse; but his trained hearing knows that this is only the quick pursuit of friends or foes, and not the approach of any aid for *him*. The cold wind makes its strident noise amidst the reeds; he watches them bend before it; and it is, perhaps, the last thing that he sees or thinks about.

Some, the least fatally wounded, have spare thought for a fellow-sufferer lying near, and crawl to aid him; but the most part are lost in an overpowering pity and sorrow for themselves. And, besides, they are so thirsty.

There is in all their minds, whether they are sons, husbands, or lovers, a pervading sense of horrible ill-usage — ill-usage, by whom they

scarcely know or care; but, had they energy, they would be inclined to curse the universal nature of things.

And oh, my God! how I wish that some of those who are the prime causers of all this agony, could themselves suffer some of the agony they cause. But no: they are away in snug rooms, telegraphing accounts of victory, or summoning for slaughter new levies to their aid. Their time has not yet come.

Mauleverer. And thus great Nations are welded together, and historians write grandly about this welding; and the grass is very green in certain spots of the earth's surface; and everything is quite satisfactory in this "best of all possible worlds."

[There was no more conversation after this, to-day, worth recording; and so I close the chapter.]

CHAPTER VIII.

[THE original purport of these conversations has been greatly changed. At the time they commenced, it was hoped that the termination of the war between France and Prussia would not long be deferred. Mr. Milverton had prepared his views upon several subjects connected with general culture, and had hoped to discuss them with his friends. But general culture has, comparatively speaking, faded away from men's thoughts; and people now, in almost every quarter of the globe, can hardly think of anything else but war, present or to come.

We were all assembled in the study, and there had been the discussion which takes place daily upon obscure telegrams of obscure battles, a discussion ending in nothing but hazardous conjectures. Mr. Milverton was evidently in very bad spirits; and Sir John Ellesmere, to comfort him,

had reminded the friends of a metaphor which Mr. Milverton had often used on previous occasions. He had said, the advance of civilization is like the advance of the in-coming tide, which, for any given moment, appears to the bystander to be as much of a retreat as of an advance; but still the tide comes on. Sir John asked him whether the metaphor did not still hold good.]

Milverton. One is very loth to give up a metaphor which has become a favourite one for oneself; but I hardly venture to say that I could use it now. The world seems to me to have gone mad of late years. I picture to myself some superior being looking down upon us, and I think what he would say. "Here are these poor wretched creatures, men; ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed; not having as yet attained the first elements of civilization; and they must employ all their spare time, thought, and energy in tearing one another to pieces." Almost the worst of it is, that we cannot imagine a superior being making any of these severe comments upon our doings, which should be other than commonplace remarks. We know it all, just as well as he does. We, at least those of us who have any pretension to the power of thinking, think as I conjecture he

would. But nothing in the way of remedy occurs to any of us. For my own part, I can only go back to what I have said a hundred times before. And it appears to me like a doleful old song, which a bewildered sick man goes on droning out to wearied listeners; and the attendants at the bed-side say to themselves, "If he were in health again, he would sing to us some other song, for we have heard this a hundred times."

Ellesmere. Let us hear the song for the hundred and first time.

Milverton. Well, all the present mischief seems to me to arise from certain wild and mistaken ideas, which governing people have taken from time immemorial, of what are the duties, and what should be the object of government. It is the old story over again, that some wonderful felicity will accrue to mankind from the accretion of certain territories under one headship, subject to one form of government. If a well-known and admirable suggestion of Lord Melbourne's, addressed to certain fussy people of his time, had been adopted by sundry governing persons who have had great power for the last ten years, it would have been a grand thing for the world. "Can't you leave it alone?" was

what he was wont to say; and if they had left it alone, how wisely they would have acted.

Ellesmere. Lord Melbourne, as far as I know anything about him, was a man after my heart. He seemed to me to have an element of wisdom in him; a kind of wisdom which has gone out of fashion in the present day. I have no doubt that there are many things which these governing persons, whom you allude to, would have done well to leave alone. What other defects, or superabundancies, have you to note in them?

Milverton. It is an extraordinary remark to make, but I think it is a true one, that there is a total absence of generosity in the dealings of States with one another, and even in the dealings of individual Governments with the sections of people under them. I would make an exception for our own government, because it has, several times, in the course of the last half-century, given examples of singular generosity; but I can seldom find a trace of this generosity elsewhere.

Mauleverer. I should be much obliged by your telling me what we have ever done that is generous.

Milverton. Our conduct in the abolition of slavery was generous. Our attempts, of late

years, to conciliate Ireland have been generous. Our free-trade policy is generous. I am one of those who are convinced that free-trade triumphed, not so much because it was thought to be for our own interest, as because it was thought to be just; and the classes who supposed that they should suffer most, ultimately resolved to bear that suffering, on the ground that the policy in question would conduce to the public good. I could give other instances of generosity, but these will suffice to illustrate what I mean.

But there has been a terrible want of generosity to be seen throughout the political world in modern times. What a splendid opportunity for generous behaviour Louis Napoleon had at one time, but never used it. I am the last person to run down that prince, for whose conduct throughout his difficult reign there is a great deal to be said both in praise and in extenuation; but I always thought, and have not waited for his downfall to express my thought, that he missed a golden opportunity of showing himself a great man, when he retained power beyond the time that had been allotted to him as President of the Republic.

Everywhere there has been a great misuse of power. I call it a great misuse of power, when a

powerful State absorbs smaller States, upon next to no provocation. I never shall be brought to see the especial beauty, or loveliness, of great Empires thus formed. It is clear that we have not yet passed through the robber era of the world; and that Christianity has not made any effectual resistance to Fraud and Force.

Mauleverer. Yes: we are still thorough barbarians; and your folly, my dear friend, is in not having found it out long ago.

Milverton. I deserve this reproach for having over-stated my case. Christianity has made a stout resistance to the evil passions of mankind, and has even had some effect upon the conduct of nations towards one another,—at any rate, has had some effect upon their mode of conducting warfare. Captured garrisons are no longer put to the sword; women have been respected in this war.

Ellesmere. The innocent are only starved, not put to death; and the excuse of "the necessities of war" is always put forward when a village or a town is burnt.

Milverton. What grieves me, what makes me desponding, what I cannot see my way out of, is this—that the thoughts and wishes of the really

cultivated men of the world have so little influence upon the conduct of national affairs. This failure of just influence greatly arises from that terrible centralization which many of you think to be so fine a thing. A few people get into their hands the management of the material wealth, and other resources of a Nation. Their interests, their amusements, their objects, are essentially different from those of the masses of the people whom they govern. This statement has nothing to do with the form of government. It is frequently as true of a republic as of an absolute monarchy. The poor peasant does not amuse himself with diplomacy, he only pays for it; not only with his money, but often with his blood. Two crafty persons, highly placed, set to work to contend with one another, to see which of them can make the country he sways greater, or rather bigger, than the other country; and the fortunes of millions of people are played away in the most reckless manner by these transcendent gamesters.

We, I mean we British people, are at this moment suffering from that which has been one of the severest causes of suffering in all ages. Everybody pays a huge price, and has ever paid it, for being a little in advance in civilization and

humanity of those persons who surround him. Almost all martyrdom simply means this. The prophets, and the martyrs, and the wise men who cannot conceal their wisdom, all suffer in the same way. And the same rule applies to Nations. We have come to the conclusion, rather late in the day, but still anticipating other Nations, that conquest is a dangerous thing, and that the accession of territory does not always bring strength. We are, therefore, peaceable. I believe that there is scarcely a man amongst us, certainly not a thinker, who would not willingly say we have territory enough, and perhaps more than enough, to govern well, and that we may now devote ourselves to that which ought to be the main business of all government—namely, the welfare of the individuals governed. But there are States that are far behind us in thought upon these matters, and which still believe that there is some wonderful joy and delight to be found—something which will raise the individual as well as elevate the Nation—in the accretion of territory. Themistocles said that he could not fiddle, but that he could make a small State into a great one. I must say that I think something may be said for the fiddler; and that, if he were

a good fiddler, he was perhaps a more serviceable citizen even than Themistocles.

Ellesmere. I admit that there is something in what you say; but you will persist in overlooking a motive — a very plausible motive— which has great influence with the persons whom you most condemn. It is, that they suppose that safety is coincident with the greatness, or, to use your word, the bigness, of a State, and that this safety will ensure peace.

Milverton. I admit that it is quite right to remind me of this argument in favour of the huge follies and wickednesses of governing people. But I contend that it is a fallacious argument. You may distribute, or redistribute, territory in any way that you please: you may set up, or put down, the Pyrenees: you will not thereby produce peace—that is, unless you advance to either of the two extremes which are not the least likely, at any rate in our time, to become realities. A universal Empire means peace. In the best times of the Roman Empire, as I have shown you before now, the peace of Europe, of Asia Minor, and of what was known of Africa, was maintained by 300,000 soldiers, who may almost be looked upon as having been policemen.

Again, if you could imagine Europe to be divided into small States, and the de-centralization, which I know you think I dote upon, to be carried into effect, peace would be maintained with, comparatively speaking, small armies; and the wars would, at any rate, be petty. There would not be these huge conflagrations of war.

Now you are often taunting me (by *you* I mean Ellesmere and Mauleverer) for my being unpractical; for my being an enthusiast; for my taking Utopian views. I now mean to carry the war into your own country. Are you not unpractical, enthusiastic, and Utopian, if you mean to contend that the results of the present ambitions of certain European Nations will lead inevitably to peace?

Sir Arthur. I think Milverton has you there.

Cranmer. Yes. I don't agree with Milverton in many things; but I must own that he makes a palpable hit when he asks Ellesmere and Mauleverer whether the present state of things promises peace.

Mauleverer. My good people, *I* never said that I approved of the present state of things, or of any state of things that, as far as I can see, can be brought about upon this earth. I merely

protest against Milverton's dreams. I do not support any other dreamer.

Ellesmere. Pray do not suppose that I think that any conglomeration of individuals, whether large or small, will produce wisdom in the governors, or the governed, among those individuals.

Milverton. I am very much pleased to have brought you both to this point. It leaves a free field for me.

Ellesmere. Yes; but what do you propose? What remedy have you in view?

Milverton. Well, my only remedy is to go on endeavouring to prove to mankind that they should not suppose that any great good will happen to them from being massed into large Nations; that the thought of the world, as at present directed, does not lead to the maintenance of peace, does not tend to ensure the comfort and happiness of private individuals. Tyranny ever follows in the wake of war; and, if you wish to be allowed to think, or to act, with that reasonable amount of freedom which ought to belong to every private individual, you are endangering that freedom of thought and action when you do anything that tends to promote war.

Ellesmere. I know that you often think my remarks are irrelevant and absurd; and, sometimes, when I am most in earnest you think I am most in joke. But I hold that the greatest part of the miseries of human life proceed from dulness. Some people are dull, and they must molest other people to get rid of their dulness. War is a most interesting game; and those who have the power of playing at it, will play at it, unless they can be interested in some other way.

Sir Arthur.

> "War is a game which, were their subjects wise,
> Kings would not play at."

Milverton. There is something in what Ellesmere says; only I should make the important alteration of substituting the words *want of culture* for *dulness.*

Now I will state the matter in somewhat of an abstract way. In any great war there are about twenty or thirty persons who may be charged with having been the prime movers of it. They are, for the most part, kings, statesmen, diplomatists, writers, and great speakers. Most of them are middle-aged or elderly gentlemen. According to the average value of life, they have about twelve or fifteen years' expectation of it.

One would really think that they might employ these twelve or fifteen years a little better than in concerning themselves with war. But the real fact is, that most of them, except the writers, are very ignorant. They know nothing of Science; they know little of Literature : of real statesmanship, too, very little. Many of them, I daresay, have scarcely realized the fact of which Science has informed us, that this planet is a very small and insignificant body, and that to rule over a little more or a little less of it, is not a thing to be proud, or to be ashamed of. I remember that Jean Paul says, "On travelling from one village to another, the path appears as long to us as to a mite which creeps on a map from the name of one to the name of another; and to loftier spirits our sphere may, perhaps, be a globe for their children, which is turned and explained by their tutor." If you could once implant in the minds of these governing men a love of individual culture; if you could show them what a poor thing it is for a man to pass through this life, knowing nothing of the laws of nature, nothing of all the wonders of the world (for though this planet is small it is very wonderful); they might see that there is some knowledge worth their while to acquire

before they quit this world. I hold with Goethe, that there is no such thing as waste in creation. I cannot believe but that it will profit a man's soul hereafter to have gained knowledge during its residence here; and the souls of many of those men who have had great opportunities in this world, will find themselves very bare and shivering, and as uncultured as the souls of those who have had fewest opportunities in this world, when they come to enter into another state of being.

These, however, you may well say, are but mere fancies. I rest, however, on solid ground when I say, these men who promote war might find a much higher ambition for all their energy and all their talents.

[Here Mr. Milverton was called out of the room.]

Lady Ellesmere. I am only going to say what I believe Leonard would have said for us women if he had not been interrupted. I know he would, for he has said something of the same kind before.

I am not one of those women who have any notion of seizing power from men. I do not blame the efforts of many of my sex who are endeavouring to gain a more reasonable recogni-

tion of our talents and our powers: but there are several of their objects with which I do not sympathise; and I fully admit the mental superiority of men. Yet this I do say, that I most earnestly believe that if we had more political power, or, at least, more political influence, it would be well used.

In the first place, we are more pitiful than you men. I believe that the anguish caused by this present war has entered more deeply into the souls of women than of men.

Well then, again (I hope you will not think me presumptuous), we are less likely to be led away by what you men call "great ideas." I have never heard, or at least only once in my life, any woman of any nation express a wish for increased territory. Our circle may be more confined; but within that circle I do think that we take a wiser view of things in general. We are more oppressed by a sense of the real difficulties of life. We care more than you men do, that the people about us should be well housed, and well clothed, and well fed. Everywhere the woman is the person, in almost every household, who looks most anxiously to the physical well-being of the household. And this, I contend,

carries with it a wisdom of its own. Brother Leonard sometimes has an air of patronizing us in what he says, and I think he hardly does us justice. In reality, we are his best supporters; and if ever his diatribes against war have any success, it will be through us women.

Ellesmere. I have nothing to say against your remarks, my dear. I admit that your sense and judgment are admirable as regards those affairs that come justly within your province, and I acknowledge that you are eminently practical. I am quite willing, when there is a council of war held by us savages, that the squaws should have a voice in the proceedings.

For my own part, I don't mind telling you what horrifies me most in war. Now don't exclaim, when you have heard what I have got to say, "Oh, that's so like Ellesmere! He always takes a perverse view of every question." I say, then, that what I detest most in war is the cruelty to the animal creation. My mind is full of pity for those good creatures, the horses. They have had nothing to do with the causes of war; their vote has not been taken; but they have to bear not the least share of the agony. I sometimes regret that mankind ever succeeded in taming horses.

I think, too, that if we had to do all the draught-work ourselves, there would be much less inclination to go to war than there is at present.

Sir Arthur. I should be contented if the men who promote war really took a fair share of the danger, and ran the risks of private soldiers. I think it is perfectly monstrous that a man should, as it were, blow the trumpet, and yet keep in the rear.

Ellesmere. My dear Sir Arthur, you must not think me rude; but really, you imaginative men do put forth most unreasonable propositions. You want those whom you call "promoters of war" to partake the dangers of the common soldier. Now, in many cases, these promoters are the commanders of armies. Surely, the duty of a general—a sacred duty, in many instances, for the preservation of his own soldiers—is to keep out of harm's way. Except in extraordinary instances, his sword is worn only for form's sake.

Sir Arthur. I must own that there is something in what you say, Ellesmere.

Mauleverer. Nobody can accuse the first Napoleon of want of courage; but, if I recollect rightly, he was only wounded once, and then by

a spent ball, which hit his boot. No, it is inevitable that these "promoters of war," who, as Milverton justly described them, are kings, statesmen, authors, diplomatists, and orators, must inevitably keep out of harm's way. This is one of the many infelicities of mankind, which, as I often tell you, cannot be avoided.

Sir Arthur. Well, then, Ellesmere, what do you propose? I must say, and *I*, too, do not wish to be rude, that you object to everything, but propose nothing.

Ellesmere. I have nothing distinctly to propose. Nay, more, I believe I talked nonsense to you the other day, Sir Arthur, when I said that if ever war were put down, it would be by some great movement—some kind of crusade—of which I did not see my way to specifying the nature. I have thought since of what I said then, and I am inclined to believe that the desired object will not be accomplished in that way. There is, I suspect, nothing to be done in this matter but bringing thought gradually to bear upon the whole subject. Milverton is horribly disappointed because the writings of Bastiat, Erckmann-Chatrian, and others, of course including his own, seem to have had so little effect in their generation.

[Here Mr. Milverton entered the room.]

I am saying that you are horribly disappointed, Milverton, because the writings of sundry enthusiastic persons who have written against war, have had so little effect in their own time. I think you show an unreasonable impatience in expecting these writings to have an almost immediate effect. Recollect, that to produce any great effect on any question in which the world is interested, many thousands of people have to be convinced. You writers are always so impatient for visible results. You think, when you have proved anything to your own satisfaction, that all other persons must forthwith acknowledge the truth of your conclusions, and must proceed to act upon them. And must proceed to act upon them, I repeat; for you seem to forget the inevitable delay and hesitation which mostly take place between intellectual conviction and practical action upon that conviction.

I mean to be very encouraging in what I say now upon this matter. Go on writing and protesting, and storming, if you like, against the evils of war; but all I say is, do not expect immediate results. Your time will come, not, perhaps, in your own age——

Mauleverer. Which is, no doubt, a great satisfaction——

Ellesmere. But that time will come. No effort, that is worth anything, is ever lost.

Sir Arthur. Yes; as Byron says—

> For freedom's battle, once begun,
> Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
> Though baffled oft, is ever won.

Milverton. We all know that there is a great deal of truth in what Ellesmere says. Moreover, we may take some comfort from what has happened in the world's history in similar cases. There has been some great evil—some world-wide folly—such as duelling, or judicial torture, or persecution for religious opinions. The horrid evil has gone on, apparently without any abatement in many generations, when all of a sudden the evil thing has fallen away from mankind, like a garment which no longer fits, and you are unable to say, "who has done this?" No doubt thousands of persons have been concerned in the doing.

Therefore I say, with the sanguine Ellesmere, let us go on writing and protesting, and, to use his phrase, storming against the evils of war, being sure that in good time some grand result

will come of all our labours which hitherto appear to have been so lamentably fruitless.

Ellesmere. I must have a last word. Milverton has quoted from Jean Paul to-day. He (Milverton) once made me read a work of the said Jean Paul. It did not quite suit my commonplace nature, which pines for distinct statements clearly enunciated. But I was much struck by the wealth of metaphor which the good German expended in his work. One of these happy metaphors has ever since remained in my mind; and, oddly enough, it was only last evening, when we passed a pond in our homeward walk, that this metaphor recurred to me. Jean Paul says, "The frogs cease croaking when a light is placed on the banks of the pond." That is all you want—light—and a great many things besides the croaking of frogs (which, for my part, I rather like) will cease, when once a sufficient light is brought to bear upon them.

CHAPTER IX.

[I ADD a short chapter, recording a conversation in the afternoon of the same day on which the foregoing conversation took place.

Lady Ellesmere had been telling Mr. Milverton what she had said in the morning about women being his best allies in the general crusade against war. "Yes," said Sir John; "Pope says that 'every woman is at heart a rake.' I don't know whether that is true; but I admit that every woman is at heart a quakeress, except in the article of clothing."]

Milverton. The best human beings of the present day, the women, are in full accord with the greatest, or, at least, the shrewdest men of past times. I am tired of always giving you my own poor thoughts upon this horrid subject, war. Yesterday evening I solaced my soul by looking round these bookshelves, and taking down works which I knew would have something in them that

would be entirely consonant with my feelings on the subject. What a blessing books are, seeing that one can always choose one's companions from amongst them, in whatever mood one happens to be!

Ellesmere. Yes; you can pass by the *Opera Omnia* of Ellesmere, of which, however, I do not see a large paper copy in this room; and you can take down your Sir Arthur *On the Becoming*, or your Cranmer on the *Loveliness of Taxation*; and you can revel in community of thought with these great authors. And, moreover, you can shut them up the moment that you find they are beginning to disagree with you.

Milverton. There was one book I did shut up. It was Sir William Temple's works. I was dreadfully disappointed at finding that he was only partially on my side.

Sir Arthur. Let us hear what the others said.

Milverton. I will begin with that great Italian historian, Guicciardini. He says:—

"No mortal thing should Man more desire, neither attribute to a higher Felicity, than to behold his Enemy prostrate upon the Earth, and reduced to such a Condition, that he hath him at

his discretion. But the more Felicitous is he to whom this doth chance, the more is he bound to render himself Glorious, by using it in a laudable manner; that is, to show Clemency, and to pardon; which is the especial Quality of Generous and Exalted Spirits.

"Those Undertakings and Affairs, which are not to be expected to fall through any sudden shock, but through consuming and wasting away, draw out to a much greater length than is believed at first; because, when men are obstinately determined to endure, they endure and sustain much more than would be believed. Wherefore, we see that a War, which is to be finished by Famine, by Inconveniency, by Lack of Money, or the like, runs off farther than would be believed. As it often happens with one who is dying of a Phthisic, that his Life doth always prolong itself beyond the opinion of the Physicians. Thus a Merchant, before he fails through being consumed by Usury, doth always stand a longer Time than was believed."

Now I have before ventured to commend to Count Von Bismarck and to M. Jules Favre, some passages similar to the foregoing, which I was fortunate enough to find in Machiavelli; but

I am afraid that my lucubrations had not much chance of reaching the ears of those potent personages. And if they had reached them, I believe I might as well have suggested to the east wind to be gentle and consolatory; to young men, not to fall in love with the wrong person; to old men, to approve of their sons making moneyless marriages; to statesmen, to abjure expediency; to lawyers, to say nothing in favour of their clients but what they thoroughly believe to be true; and to learned Churchmen, to avoid subtleties;—as to recommend such wise conduct, as Machiavelli counsels, to the combatants on either side.

Ellesmere. Don't abuse my friend Bismarck, but give us some more extracts.

Milverton. I will now give you three from Voltaire, in an excellent article which he wrote in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*:—

"Vers le Canada, *homme et guerrier* sont synonymes; et nous avons vu que dans notre hémisphère, *voleur et soldat* étaient même chose. Manichéens! voilà votre excuse.

"Le merveilleux de cette entreprise infernale, c'est que chaque chef des meurtriers fait bénir ses drapeaux et invoque Dieu solennellement, avant d'aller exterminer son prochain.

"Misérables médecins des âmes, vous criez pendant cinq quarts d'heure sur quelques piqûres d'épingle, et vous ne dites rien sur la maladie qui nous déchire en mille morceaux! Philosophes moralistes, brûlez tous vos livres. Tant que le caprice de quelques hommes fera loyalement égorger des milliers de nos frères, la partie du genre humain consacrée à l'héroïsme sera ce qu'il y a de plus affreux dans la nature entière."

Ellesmere. How admirably the fellow writes! Now that is the kind of writing I like, in which there is transparent clearness.

Milverton. Now I must trouble you with a passage from Swift. It is in the *Travels of Gulliver amongst the Houyhnhnms.* He is informing his master about the warlike proceedings in Europe. The Houyhnhnm remarks:—

"'In recounting the numbers of those who have been killed in battle, I cannot but think you have said the thing which is not.'

"I could not forbear shaking my head and smiling a little at his ignorance. And, being no stranger to the art of war, I gave him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines,

bombardments, sea-fights, ships sunk with a thousand men, twenty thousand killed on each side, dying groans, limbs flying in the air, smoke, noise, confusion, trampling to death under horses' feet, flight, pursuit, victory; fields strewed with carcases, left for food to dogs, and wolves, and birds of prey; plundering, stripping, ravishing, burning, and destroying. . . . I was going on to more particulars, when my master commanded me silence. He said, 'whoever understood the nature of *Yahoos*, might easily believe it possible for so vile an animal to be capable of every action I had named, if their strength and cunning equalled their malice. . . . . But when a creature pretending to reason could be capable of such enormities, he dreaded lest the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself.' He seemed, therefore, confident, that instead of reason, we were only possessed of some quality fitted to increase our natural vices, as the reflection from a troubled stream returns the image of an ill-shapen body, not only larger, but more distorted."

Ellesmere. This, too, is admirable. Here is another writer who never leaves one in doubt as to what he means.

Milverton. Now I am going to rejoice the cockles of your heart, Ellesmere, and to give you an opportunity of reading to the assembled company the fable which you have imparted to me. I return to my Guicciardini. You may observe that I am not quoting from that ponderous work, but from a little book written by a lady, Emma Martin, who has given a translation of his maxims. I have not had time to verify the translation.

"I commend him who stands Neutral in the Wars of his Neighbours, if he be so powerful, or hath his Dominions of such Condition, as that he hath nothing to fear from the Conqueror; because he doth thus avoid Peril, Expenses, and Exhaustion, and the Disorders of the others may afford him some profitable Opportunity. Except it be with these conditions, Neutrality is foolishness, because, binding thyself to one of the parties, thou dost run no danger but the Victory of the other, but standing between, thou art always bruised, conquer who will."

Cranmer. I should like to hear your fable now, Sir John.

Ellesmere. Oh, it's a poor foolish little thing.

Milverton. Pray don't be modest, Ellesmere, but give it them at once. I tell you candidly that

I mean, if I can, to compose a fable on the other side of the question, for some future occasion.

Ellesmere. It won't be as good as mine.

Milverton. Now Ellesmere is speaking in his natural tone, which becomes him much better than when he is superfluously modest.

Ellesmere. Well, here is the fable, since you will have it :—

A spectacle very attractive to all boys, and indeed to most grown-up people, is occasionally to be seen in our streets.

It consists of a perambulating cage, containing birds and animals of various kinds, all living together in complete harmony, and enticingly labelled "The happy family."

A monkey is seated on a cat's back, to the complete satisfaction, apparently, of both parties; a mouse nestles to an owl; a hawk fondles a sparrow; a raven's only thought appears to be, that each of its friends and fellow-prisoners should enjoy its own property.

Altogether "the happy family" forms a most instructive sight to the human beings who crowd round it—a slightly reproachful, but still a most engaging object for contemplation.

This "happy family," when at home, and off

duty, no longer being obliged to perform a most unwilling friendship, sometimes indulges in its natural propensity for internecine warfare.

The weather was cold; and there was a good fire in the showman's garret, for monkeys (expensive creatures to buy, and not easily tamed) are very chilly, and require warmth and care, lest, like their human prototypes (as they call us), they should languish away in consumption.

The genial heat provoked the combative tendencies of some of the members of "the happy family." The hawk and the raven commenced a fierce attack with beak and claw upon each other. The dog, a mastiff, the only really tamed and good-natured creature in the miniature menagerie, summoned with loud barking his master, who happened to be absent, then growled his displeasure at this outbreak, and finally lay down upon the hearth-rug, blinking and winking as is the wont of dogs while basking in the light of the fire.

The contest ended with many screams of rage and much flying about of fluff and feather. But peace was not in their minds. Both combatants, after a moment's pause, made a common onslaught upon the unhappy dog; for each maintained that

he had winked encouragement and approbation to the other side. The pecks and clawings of furious hawks and ravens are not pleasant things to encounter, and may, at first, appal even the most stout-hearted of dogs. And, at last, when victory did incline to his side, he was somewhat of a piteous spectacle. But wisdom is seldom gained without suffering. And surely it was a wise saying which the dog then uttered, "If they quarrel again, I will take a side early in the fray, and not have to endure, at the same time, the claw of the hawk and the beak of the raven. These creatures are not tame enough, or wise enough, to understand the merits of a consistent neutrality."

Cranmer. The fable is a very droll one, but you really don't mean, Ellesmere, that we should take a part in this war?

Ellesmere. I don't know that I mean anything. I won't be cross-questioned in this way. Great imaginative writers are not bound to accommodate themselves to the peculiar circumstances of the present moment. I give you something which has a certain appropriateness in it for all times. The poor dog's honest nature and unintentional winking, are always misunderstood. You can't

take *Faust* home, can you, and apply it as a family book? It does not pretend to be an equivalent for Buchan's *Domestic Medicine.*

Sir Arthur. I wish that Ellesmere were one of us authors. How he would defend us and his *Opera Omnia* at the same time!

Ellesmere. Here is a streak of sunshine! Do you see? For goodness' sake, don't let us waste our time in this dull study in talking about authors and their works, when there is a chance of our getting a walk before dinner, after all this rain.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

CHAPTER X.

[THE visit of our friends was nearly concluded; and they were to return to London in a day or two. Mr. Milverton and I were in the study expecting them to join us, in order to have a final discussion upon some of the many points which had been raised in the course of these conversations. I was deploring to him how little we had done of all that we intended to do, and was reminding him, for instance, of the careful preparation I had made, under his direction, of the various books which he thought should be read by any man who was to be considered to be a cultivated man in English literature. "Never mind, Alick," he said. "Culture must, for the present, take care of itself. What little we have managed to say about war, will be talked of by Ellesmere and Sir Arthur at London dinner-tables, and will not be altogether lost. I mean,

moreover, if we can get an opportunity to-day, to sum up, as shortly as may be, a few of the conclusions I have come to about war."

At this moment, Sir John Ellesmere and Sir Arthur entered the room.]

Ellesmere. Sir Arthur and I, Milverton, have been having a dispute, which has almost degenerated into a quarrel, about the nature of Love. I believe that I have invented an aphorism about Love, which closely borders upon perfection. But Sir Arthur persists in not seeing the merit of it.

I say, that the person you love most, is the person with whom you can stay longest without being bored. Of course, I know that there are different kinds of love; but this one great maxim will apply to all. Sir Arthur talks of "unity of soul," and "community of sentiment," and all the fine things that Sir Arthur naturally would talk of; but, to use an emphatic expression, they are mostly "bosh." Don't accuse me of being rude to Sir Arthur: he has been very rude to me, and has told me I know nothing about the subject I pretend to understand.

Unity of soul! I have a very high opinion of Sir John Ellesmere as a companion, but I don't

want another of the sort to live with me. He would bore me terribly. Then, as to "community of sentiment," I commune in sentiment very much with Clarkson, Wilberforce, and Co., about slavery and the slave-trade. I should not, however, have wished to have lived much with them. They would have bored me to extinction.

But listen. [Sir John, in his careless way, had left the study-door open, and we could hear what Mrs. Milverton and Mr. Mauleverer were talking about on the landing.]

Mauleverer. There should be a soupçon of garlic in it.

Mrs. Milverton. But my husband does not like garlic, Mr. Mauleverer.

Mauleverer. He must be made to like it. Besides, he will know nothing whatever about it, if you are discreet in its use. You women overdo everything. It requires the delicacy of a man-cook to apply telling flavours.

"Thin, but not too thin; thick, but not too thick," as Mr. Woodhouse says of his gruel, in Miss Austin's *Emma*. If that wise old gentleman had given us his thoughts about pepper, and garlic, and other condiments, there would have been the same element of wisdom in them.

Mrs. Milverton. But we must go; they will be waiting for us in the study.

Ellesmere. Now, *there* is community of sentiment; but, after all, I do not think they would have lived happily together. She would not have been content to look up at our stout friend, with the mute admiration with which she regards her husband during his dullest discourse. But here they come.

[*Enter* MRS MILVERTON *and* MAULEVERER.

We were talking, Mrs. Milverton, about love. It is of no good recounting to you what I have said, because it is a subject of which you know but little; but I will go on to say that I have a scheme in my head for making every marriage a perfectly happy one. I mean to be a supreme benefactor to the human race. But you must not put up a statue to me, for that form of gratitude is one which I beg to decline. I do not wish to be made ridiculous in future ages. No, no: only a simple white slab, with these few words upon it:—

This was the man who prevented unhappy marriages.

Milverton. I suppose we must let Ellesmere go on talking his nonsense until Cranmer and my lady make their appearance.

Ellesmere. Nonsense! As if it were not a far greater benefit for the human race to set up marriage than to put down war, which latter transaction, with all his endeavours, Milverton will find somewhat difficult.

It is a very slight change which I shall propose. It will merely be, making the honeymoon, or something like the honeymoon, precede the marriage. Then they will find out whether they bore one another much, and whether they really can live happily together for an indefinite time.

Sir Arthur. Let us hear the details of the scheme.

Ellesmere. I hate details. They are the ruin of great thoughts, which otherwise would be carried into action. But I am ready with my details on this occasion. No marriage should take place without a certificate from some responsible householder (I should prefer its being one from the prospective mother-in-law of the prospective bride), stating that the high contracting parties have lived in the same house together, *en famille*, for one month.

There are several minor details. A young man must not say to a young woman, "Will you marry me?" But, "Will you take a moon with

me?" It is not to be called a honeymoon, or a verjuicemoon, but simply a "moon."

Then there must be a short Act of Parliament, or Order in Council. I have already drawn it up in my mind. It is to run thus :—

"Whereas, by reason of the naughtiness of men and the tiresomeness of women, many marriages are not found to be so happy as they ought to be; and whereas it is presumed that this misfortune arises from the fact that the persons contracting to marry have no sufficient knowledge of each other, and do not know whether they will bore each other very much or not; it is expedient to order (I think it should be an Order in Council), and it is hereby ordered; that all persons being about to marry, should, previously to the marriage being solemnized, produce a certificate, certifying that they have lived in the same house together, as members of the same family, for the time of one lunar month.

"Let this Order be communicated to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and let all persons herewith concerned govern themselves accordingly."

Milverton. When will any one put a stop to Ellesmere's nonsense?

Sir Arthur. There is somebody coming who, I think, will do so. I hear the rustle of feminine garments.

[*Enter* LADY ELLESMERE *and* CRANMER.

Ellesmere. No wonder that women are so much less shy than men; because they are so conscious that they make a sensation wherever they come, with their superfluities of adornment. Whereas, look at Cranmer, how he sneaks into the room behind my lady, being conscious of what a poor appearance he makes in that tweed suit of his, when compared with her flowing magnificence of attire.

Sir Arthur. You have lost a great deal, Lady Ellesmere, in not hearing what your husband has just been saying about love and marriage.

Lady Ellesmere. Marriage he may know something about; but of love—very little, if anything.

Milverton. When shall we come to business?

Ellesmere. It is all Sandy's fault that Milverton is so strict with us these times. Sandy is an enemy to all fun: will never laugh himself; and, if he had a family, would never permit any of his family to laugh.

Milverton. You are all going away, and somehow or other, I have been prevented from consulting you, as I meant to do, about the general subject of culture.

Ellesmere. Let us take it all for granted. I cannot say that the subject has altogether been omitted. You have dwelt upon the advantages of scientific education; and you have made me commence my education in that respect.

Milverton. Well, now, I want to make a finale, or rather a summary, of what I have said, or have had to say, upon the subject of war, which subject has been the one that has insisted upon being chiefly discussed by us, during our brief holiday.

I have endeavoured to show you that the agglomeration of small States may not be a serviceable thing for the world. I will begin by dwelling a little upon that point; and I am now going to say something which I do not think has been taken into consideration by any of you. This agglomeration of States will eventually lead to the formation of some great metropolis. I hold that a great metropolis, from its unwieldy nature, is an evil of the first magnitude.

All the difficulties, with regard to sanitary

regulations, are increased, in almost geometrical progression, according as the town begins to rise in population, say from two hundred thousand to a million of inhabitants. I am not going to enter into details. I merely throw this thought before you, as one which, perhaps, is worthy of your consideration.

Again, I have dwelt upon a fact, for such it appears to me to be; namely, that the larger the nation, the less likely it is for the governing body to be well chosen.

I have pointed out, or ought to have pointed out, what great things have been done in Science, Literature, and Art, by Principalities or Republics of exceeding smallness as regards population.

I have told you, until you are weary of hearing me, that the evils of war outweigh all other evils of the world; moreover, that war is a most reproductive calamity. Other calamities often have a speedy end. The potato plant or the rice plant fails. There is a famine in the land. It is a terrible scourge, but it has not a tendency to produce anything like itself. On the contrary, it generally leads to a better husbandry and to a better management of material resources. The same thing may be said of pestilence. It nearly

always leads to an improvement in sanitary arrangements. But war, unless the issues of it are most skilfully managed, only leads to an armed peace, which your friends, Cranmer, the political economists, think to be almost more mischievous than war itself.

Ellesmere. Is he going on for ever, this man?

Milverton. He means to go on for some time longer.

He now insists upon the want of generosity in this world, and the utter want of Christianity. There has not been any quarrel in our times amongst nations, that is not liable to the censure conveyed in the preceding words. It seems as if people had lost the idea, which even preceded Christianity, and which finds its best expression in one of Æsop's fables; namely, that the genial sun is a more powerful agent than the bitter and boisterous wind,—at any rate, in uncloaking your adversary.

Now, with regard to quite another point. Ellesmere has given us an ingenious fable, meant to imply that neutrality is a bad thing. Fables are like proverbs, and can be twisted and turned in any way. I have not had time to evolve a fable in opposition to his. But there is

no need of fables. When he was urged upon the point, he would not say that his fable had any immediate application to the present state of things. I admit that the questions which have been raised, concerning the duties of neutrals, and the policy of non-intervention, require to be maturely considered. But, at the same time, I maintain that our "attitude," to use the common phrase, on this present occasion, has been, in almost all respects, thoroughly justifiable. If no nation is to show a great unwillingness to enter into war, how is war ever to be discontinued? And, surely, you, even those among you who are not Utopians, do look forward to some period, however distant, when the quarrels of nations will be settled without the arbitrament of war. . . .

Then there is the cattle plague. You may depend upon it, this is not one of the least scourges that belong to a state of war. I wish people would really consider how all these millions of human beings who inhabit Europe, are to be fed, if we allow a state of warfare, or of large preparation for warfare, to be nearly permanent amongst us. I have no doubt, whatever, that the great outbreak of the cattle plague in Europe, during the last century, was occasioned by war, and that

the loss of many a battle is to be attributed to the loss of provisions caused by this plague. Yet, how rarely is any mention made of the plague by historians! This is a wonderful instance of the way in which even observant persons fail to recognize the importance of the most important things that are happening before their own eyes. I referred to Smollett's *History of England* for the year in which the cattle plague broke out during the last century in our own country, and I found that the memorable domestic event of that year was a remarkable murder of a man and his wife, which occurred in or near London. In the recent outbreak of this plague, we lost cattle, the value of which was estimated at five millions of money. We are now well prepared to meet, and I hope, to conquer, any outbreak of this disease that may occur here. But we may be baffled; and at any rate the restrictions upon trade which are needful in order to keep out the plague, or to have at hand the readiest means of suppressing it, are very hurtful to trade. Our danger at the present moment has been entirely produced by this war; and I am sure I am not wrong in enumerating the cattle plague as one of the evils consequent upon war.

I now turn to another branch of the subject. I cannot help blaming (I hope my blame is not unjust) diplomacy for not having done more to prevent this war. It seems clear to me, that if Louis Napoleon's ambassadors had known more of the state of public feeling in the respective countries to which they were accredited, this war would never have taken place. It is evident that the Emperor was perfectly in error when he supposed that the States of Southern Germany would not unite with the Prussians in a war against France. The error of diplomatists, is, that they are apt to content themselves with learning what are the views and wishes of the upper ten thousand; but do not observe or appreciate the current of popular opinion, which, in our times, must largely affect the decisions of every Government.

There is one general remark which I must make; and it is this,—that we must be very careful, in commenting upon this war, or upon any other great event in which nations are concerned, not to attribute too much to what we affirm to be national characteristics. I am not sure that I am not to blame for having fallen into this error, in the part which I have taken in these con-

versations. The words of the preacher are surely to the purpose, when he says that there is "neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all." I am, as you know, a great admirer of the Spanish people, and the question has often been put to me, How is it that these people, whom you admire so much, have of late done so little in the world? It must be from some defect of national character. But I do not believe that it is anything of the kind, and am prepared to show that, since the days of Charles the Fifth, the Spaniards have been a singularly unfortunate people—especially unfortunate in their sovereigns. Again, I say it does not become us, who have been remarkably fortunate in our geographical position, and in the circumstances of our history, to attribute too much of our national success to our national character. And, reverting to the subject which has mostly occupied our thoughts of late, we must be slow to pronounce, that the main events of this war have been determined by the national characteristics of either of the contending nations. As regards the Germans, we must recollect that the war has been principally organized by a foreigner, and the diplomacy con-

ducted by a man of foreign extraction. As regards the French, it must be observed, that no one of us, though we all think we understand the French, succeeded in anticipating the conduct that they would pursue on their principal city being besieged. Such facts as these should make us very careful in drawing conclusions as to national character, and as to the results to be expected from that character. I have no doubt that, for many years to come, historians, moralists, and philosophers will point to this war, and assert many things, respecting the national character of both nations concerned, which will be disproved when either of these nations comes again prominently before the world.

With regard to the Secret Treaties which had been made without any cognizance on our part; I do not blame our diplomatists. In every transaction, an honest man, who has no indirect purposes, is at great disadvantage when dealing with others who are not so honest as he is, and have purposes which they cannot openly avow.

Lastly, there is a great problem to be solved, in the best way that it can be, by this country, and which has to be especially considered by you members of Parliament. The whole country seems anxious to increase our means of offence

and defence. I do not wonder at this. The few pleasures that there are in this world are not confined to eating and drinking, to dancing and singing, or even to being well clothed and well housed; in short, to being made comfortable. It needs no Akenside to tell us that "the pleasures of the imagination" are very keen; and, no doubt, it is a great pleasure—nay, more, it is a great satisfaction,—to feel that, as a nation, we are not without considerable influence in the world's affairs. Moreover, we have been accustomed to enjoy this satisfaction, and we begin to miss it now. I am not going to contend that we should not desire to resume this satisfaction; although, I think, that probably we somewhat underrate the influence which we have at present, notwithstanding all our supposed infirmity of purpose and action.

Ellesmere. I will give you a little assistance, Milverton. Returning home late at night from some tiresome debate, I have witnessed a quarrel between some man and woman, probably husband and wife: the woman has uttered all manner of injurious taunts, and has not failed to call him a coward; but she knows all the time that the man is no coward. I need say no more.

Milverton. Thanks, Ellesmere, for your illustration. I have said before, and I say again, that a foreign nation cannot make a greater political mistake, than when it supposes that England will not fight.

I must, however, return to what I mean to say to you parliamentary men. You have this painful problem before you which I have just stated, and which I will sum up in the following words :—You have to make this country reasonably satisfied that due preparation is made for offence or defence, to provide against the contingencies of war. But, at the same time, you will have to take care that you do not make our people a warlike people—or, rather, a people whose first thought is war, or preparation for war. If you attain the latter object, you will break down our greatness in other respects, and you will go against the genius of the nation ; you will prevent its reaping those advantages which its geographical position ought to command. I forbear to speak of the injury to Science, Art, and Literature, which would be occasioned if you enter, without reservation, into a close competition with other nations as regards warlike preparation, and especially if you servilely adopt their peculiar

methods of training, which may suit them very well, but which, I believe, will not be found to suit us at all.

I beg to remark, that I do not agree with those people who suppose, that if a general system of military education were adopted now, in those countries which have it not, that system would preclude the existence, or essentially diminish the number of standing armies. If you do not take great care, you will have both evils. I think that history will support me in this. Take the times of Louis XI. of France, and his father, Charles VII. I believe that in those times almost every man received some training as a soldier, and yet these kings had standing armies. They would be considered ludicrously small armies now, but they were sufficient to ensure tyranny then. If I recollect rightly, Philippe de Commines comments upon the mischief and the burden that Louis XI.'s standing army was to his subjects. However that may be, I feel confident that, in the present day, those persons will be very much deceived who think that, by favouring and furthering a general military education of the people, they will succeed in reducing standing armies.

Now I have something very important to add, as affecting all that I have said in these conversations, touching war. It is this: that a great part of what I have said does not apply with especial force to our own people. *We* are not desirous of acquiring territory: *we* are averse from war, not so much from feeling as from principle. But I have endeavoured to treat the subject generally; and what I have said has been directed, not so much against Anglican, as against European opinion. You may say to me, "your views will never reach the people whom you would most wish to influence!" I cannot help that. A writer, or a talker, must take the chance of his writing or his talking reaching the right people; and we should all have to adopt a Carthusian silence if we resolved never to say anything but that which is sure, at once, to meet with a reception from those persons for whom the saying is mainly intended.

Ellesmere. Well, we have listened to this discourse very patiently; and, certainly, I have very little to object to in it; unless, indeed, it be, that Milverton is kind enough to place before us members of Parliament a problem almost impossible to solve.

One thing, however, I must take leave to say, in reference to the general subject of war. You don't mean to maintain, Milverton, that war is all bad? that nothing good comes out of it?

Milverton. No; I do not maintain that anything which God permits is altogether bad.

Sir Arthur. And suffering is, perhaps, the greatest and the best of instructors. The most beautiful jewel, as I deem it to be, is said by naturalists to be a produce of suffering—the pearl.

Ellesmere. That is one of Sir Arthur's pretty sayings. I do not hold with it.

Milverton. I would rather have fewer pearls and much less suffering, even for the oysters. But, my dear Ellesmere, don't you think that there is every prospect of enough being said and done, in the course of the next generation, to favour war or to excuse it? Is it not well that there should be some few people on the other side; and that there should, at any rate, be one nation, which, while it is ready to perform its national duties and to uphold the treaties it has signed, should yet be a protesting nation, if the only protesting nation, against the horrors, miseries, and unreasonableness of those wars

which, as we have discovered with regard to the other scourges of mankind, are, for the most part, preventible?

Lady Ellesmere. We women are entirely with you, Leonard.

Ellesmere. Of course they are. To speak somewhat commercially, if not coarsely, they become a 'drug in the market' after a great war. I suppose this present war will kill six hundred thousand men. The Gretchens and Annettes will find a woeful scarcity of lovers.

Milverton. Don't joke about it, Ellesmere. It is a perfectly hideous thing to think of the private misery that will follow upon this wholesale destruction of human beings. If we lived in Pagan times, I could imagine this vast cloud of misery, as of some hateful incense, rising up to appease the nostrils of offended gods; but, with our present belief in a God of mercy, what a rank offence, in His eyes, our odious wars must be! It is now 1871 years since Our Saviour came into this world. During that time there have been a great many individual Christians, or, at any rate, persons who believed that they conformed to the dictates of their Great Master. But you will find it hard to maintain that there has been one

Christian nation, if we may judge of its claims to Christianity by its conduct towards other nations.

[Here Mr. Milverton got up, and left the room; and the conversation afterwards was only of a desultory character. This was the last sustained conversation that we had before our party broke up, and before the members of Parliament who chiefly constituted it, went up to hear the Queen's speech, and to commence the labours of the session.]

THE END.

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